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'Political correctness' under fire

Adoption may be switched to private sector

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT AND DOMINIC KENNEDY

ADOPTION services could be hived off to the private sector or to voluntary groups under radical plans drafted by the Prime Minister in an attempt to reduce the influence of social workers.

John Major has ordered an urgent review of adoption policy and of arrangements for the 55,000 children living in care. He is concerned that many social services departments do not offer adoption as a viable option to children not treated applications from prospective adoptive parents seriously.

Mr Major has asked officials at Downing Street to explore every possible alternative and to examine ways of reducing the influence of social workers on adoption.

A government source said: "We must try to reduce the role of social workers. Of course they will continue to have a part to play, but in too many cases their values are not those shared by the community in which they serve."

Mr Major's aim is to create a new adoption Bill which will end the climate of political correctness which has stifled adoption. The reform is expected to be included in the Conservative election manifesto.

Mr Major showed his personal interest and commitment to adoption reforms when he addressed the Conservative Party conference in October. He said: "Looking a little further ahead, I still hear too many stories of politically correct absurdities that prevent children being adopted

by loving couples who would give them a good home. If that is happening, we should stop it."

Mr Major believes it is important for children to be brought up in the stability of a home rather than being institutionalised in children's homes or drifting between various foster parents.

His views have hardened after the scandals of abuse in children's homes. A formal child care inquiry is to begin in North Wales next month and 15 police forces are investigating similar complaints.

A government source said: "The Prime Minister is pushing very hard on this because he knows it is the right and sensible thing to do. He is uncomfortable with these large numbers in care and the recent evidence of child abuse."

A draft adoption Bill, published earlier this year, attempted to iron out difficulties with international adoptions but it failed to be included in the Queen's Speech after representations from Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman, and Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary.

After the furore over the divorce law reforms from a Tory right-wing, they were concerned the proposed Bill would be hijacked by a vocal minority and would create a new vehicle for dissent among Tory MPs.

They also feared it would raise complex issues about the right of homosexual and single parents to adopt and could

also prompt a new debate on surrogacy.

One minister said last week: "They did not want the sound and the fury. There was a lot of nervousness with this subject in advance of the election but I believe that post-election it could be a runner and we should involve lots more agencies and charities in adoption work. We should also remember that many local authorities do a good job to the benefit of couples and children, and that it is a minority of politically correct social workers who cause the trouble."

Mr Major accepted the arguments but is determined to find sensible solutions for children in care and to raise the profile of adoption even though a number of Whitehall officials are understood to be keen on the status quo.

Sir William Utting, who is conducting an official review of children's homes after the abuse scandals in North Wales, warned ministers to tread warily before handing adoption to private agencies.

"The conduct of a business as fundamental to family life as adoption is one that ought to be carried out by government and not delegated to other authorities," Sir William, formerly the Government's chief inspector of social work, told *The Times*. "It is certainly not something that one would wish to expose to market forces. One of the big dangers in this sector is setting up the farming of babies. That was one of the problems about overseas adoption."

Continued on page 2, col 1



The Prince of Wales cuffs Prince Harry at Sandringham yesterday, accompanied on a shoot by Prince Edward

Duke leads royal pheasant shoot

BY TIM JONES AND STEPHEN FARRELL

THE DUKE OF Edinburgh led three generations of the Royal Family in a Sandringham pheasant shoot yesterday. As the Queen rode elsewhere on the estate, the Duke was joined by the Prince of Wales, Prince William and Prince Harry, the Duke of York and Prince Edward on frost-covered fields at Harpley Dams near the Peddar's Way.

Captain Timothy Laurence and Peter Phillips were also on

the shoot and the Princess Royal picked up birds and played with her daughter Zara.

The Quantock and Chiverton staghounds rode but the Beaufort was unable to hunt because of frozen ground and all meetings in Leicestershire and Wiltshire were off.

Police reported fewer anti-hunt protesters than expected and no trouble. In Oxfordshire the Bleas Hunt was

confronted by protesters from the League Against Cruel Sports.

As the horsemen and women drank a stirrup cup in the town's market square they faced a mobile poster depicting a fox which had been disembowelled by hand.

Penny Little, an executive member of the league, said she hoped it would be the last Boxing Day she had to turn out. The league believes Lab-

our would ban foxhunting if elected: the party is already committed to banning hunting on 2.5 million acres of Forestry Commission and MoD land. Elliot Morley, the party's animal welfare spokesman, confirmed yesterday that there would also be a free vote to outlaw all fox and deer hunting and hare coursing.

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BBC may end radio popularity poll after cheating

BY CAROL MIDGLEY
AND JILL SHERMAN

THE BBC seems set to scrap its annual Radio 4 *Today* Personality of the Year contest after disqualifying 4,000 votes cast for John Major, this year's winner.

The competition was plunged into controversy yet again after evidence of multiple voting for the Prime Minister, who secured 23 per cent of the poll.

Earlier this month, the contest was discredited after it emerged that a Labour party worker had tried to rig the contest in favour of Tony Blair, but had failed to get him on the shortlist.

A BBC spokeswoman said the future of the competition was "under review" and that if it was rerun it would be done differently. One option being floated was to disqualify all politicians from the event, although some argued that campaigners on certain issues would also try to rig the competition.

A senior BBC source said the poll was almost certain to be axed because it had caused so much controversy. "It is very unlikely that the BBC will want to go through this performance again next year," the source said. Another insider admitted that the discovery that Labour had tried to rig the poll had sparked intense debate about whether the competition should be shelved.

Voters were asked to vote for six nominees by telephone during a three hour period on December 18. However, the BBC found that many votes had been lodged repeatedly from the same telephones. About 4,000 were deemed suspect. The BBC would not give the exact figure.

The spokesman refused to say how it had detected the multiple calls, but added: "It was a very sophisticated

10% house price rise forecast

Housing market experts are predicting price rises of up to 10 per cent next year, more than three times the level of inflation.

Rob Thomas, City analyst at UBS Securities, expects a rise of 10 per cent and two of the largest mortgage lenders, Halifax and Nationwide, both forecast a 7 per cent increase. Page 40

Snow in South after frosty night

Temperatures today in much of Britain are not expected to rise much above overnight levels of -2C (28F) to -4C (24F). A few places will stay below freezing all day. Overnight frost will lift slowly and the South will have rain and snow this morning, the Meteorological Office said. Page 20

Riot police ordered in by Milosevic

THOUSANDS of riot police broke up anti-government demonstrations in Belgrade yesterday as President Milosevic continued to ignore American and West European pleas for restraint and threats of fresh economic sanctions.

The first death as a result of the five weeks of political protests against the ruling Socialist Party tampering with local election results was confirmed yesterday. The victim died after being beaten by Milosevic supporters on Christmas Eve.

The opposition said that their campaign had now spread from the capital to more than 50 towns, and that they would return to the streets again today.

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Brown gags Shadow Cabinet over Labour spending plans

BY JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

GORDON BROWN is stopping his Shadow Cabinet colleagues from speaking out or writing on any policy that could involve spending commitments. A letter has been sent to them from Alistair Darling, the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

They have also been warned that any interviews or articles written by frontbenchers will have to be sanctioned and vetted by Mr Brown or Mr Darling. No frontbencher will be able to draw up even rough draft documents unless they have been commissioned by the Labour leadership.

Frontbenchers wishing to table amendments to Bills going through the Commons must seek permission in case they hide spending pledges.

The letter, leaked to *The Times*, also discloses that each Shadow Cabinet member will be called to see the Treasury team in the new year "so we can be clear about your departmental commitments and priorities immediately after the election". The letter, dated December 23, also makes clear Labour will not be able to reverse all, if any, Tory spending reductions.

Mr Brown is determined to pre-empt the imminent Tory campaign on Labour's tax bombshell. Senior ministers will launch a £7 million advertising campaign in the new year, claiming that Labour will raise taxes and spending. "We will be saying we can't trust the Government on taxes or on the state of public

finances," said a Labour source.

There are also signs that Labour's existing commitments may have to be reviewed. Mr Darling's letter says next year's public spending settlement "will be very tight". He adds that the Red Book - the forecast of the country's spending commitments and revenue for the next three years - has already made clear that each department would face tough constraints. Although Labour's £3 billion programme to help the unemployed to get back to work will be sacrosanct, other pledges on nursery places, health and education spending may have to be revised.

Letters, page 17

The Queen's broadcast ratings fall

THE QUEEN'S Christmas message continued its steady decline in popularity and was watched by only 11 million viewers on Christmas Day (Carol Midgley writes).

Fewer people tuned in at 3pm than at any time since 1993, according to figures. About 9.1 million viewers saw it on BBC1 and 1.9 million on ITV.

The combined viewing figures for the Christmas message have been falling since 1993 when it drew 16.3 million viewers. That was down to 14.4 million in 1994 and 13.9 million in 1995.

However, the comedian Rory Bremner's alternative Christmas message broadcast at the same time and featuring him dressed up as Diana, Princess of Wales, was watched by 1.6 million people.

Paperboy saves day-old baby girl abandoned in hedge

BY IAN KEY

A DAY-OLD baby abandoned under a hedge in freezing temperatures was saved after a teenage paperboy heard her cries and went to investigate.

Darren Simms, 13, found the child, who had probably lain for several hours in temperatures of -3C wrapped in just a sheet and a towel, during his Boxing Day deliveries. He then cycled home to alert his mother Margaret and father Doug. Mrs Simms, a professional child-minder from Whickham, Gateshead, washed and changed the baby while her husband called police and an ambulance.

"I was cycling along the road when I

suddenly heard a baby crying," Darren said. "I stopped and looked round for a few seconds and then saw a bundle next to a fence, under a bush."

"The bundle was moving backwards and forwards. At first I panicked a bit but then I cycled home as fast as I could and got my mum. We came back in the car and took the baby home. If I had not been doing my paper round, then I would not have found her and she could have died."

The police are anxious to trace the mother, who probably gave birth on Christmas Day. She could be in need of urgent medical attention.

The baby, who weighs 6lb 14oz and has been named Molly after a relative of a

policewoman who helped to rescue her, was in satisfactory condition in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Gateshead last night.

Mrs Simms said: "I was panicking when I went up for the baby because it was so cold and I felt so sorry for her. She was obviously newborn because the umbilical cord was still attached. She was covered in blood and crying quite loudly. "I feel very sorry for the baby's mother because she must have been very frightened and had no one to turn to. She panicked but I can tell from where she left the baby that she wanted her found. She will have to go to hospital, because she will need medical help after this."



Darren Simms heard cry



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Government advisers look for explanation of regional exam variations

North-South divide in GCSE results

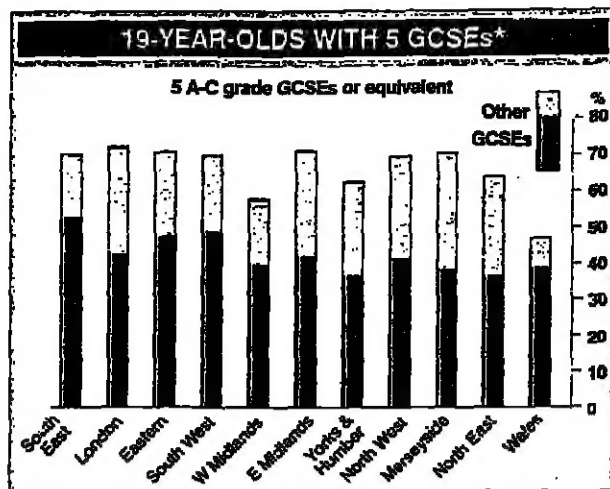
By JOHN O'LEARY
EDUCATION EDITOR

GOVERNMENT advisers are seeking explanations for a growing gap between qualifications achieved in London and in parts of the Midlands and north of England.

The quango responsible for promoting the Government's education and training targets is concerned that some regions are falling so far behind that national targets will become beyond reach. In the West Midlands, fewer than 60 per cent of 19-year-olds have the equivalent of five higher-grade GCSEs, compared with more than 70 per cent in the capital.

Although prosperity and high employment levels might explain some of the differences, academics believe social attitudes are also playing a part. Merseyside, despite high levels of unemployment, runs London a close second for basic qualifications, whereas the lowest GCSE average is in Yorkshire and Humberside.

The South East of England boasts the highest A-level pass

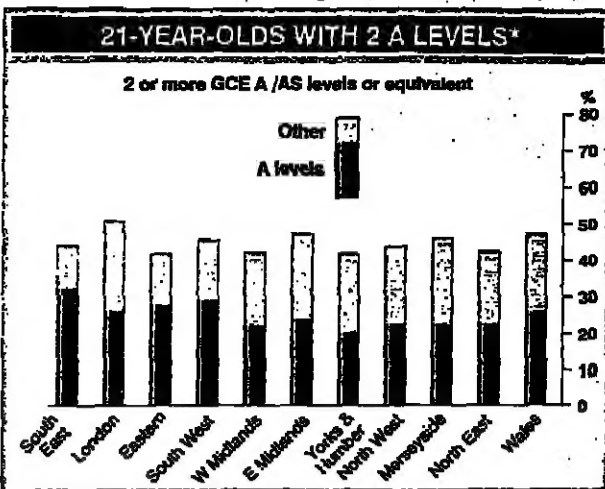


rate, but its high take-up of advanced vocational courses again puts London top of the ten English regions.

A study by the National Foundation for Educational Research is expected to produce possible explanations by Easter. But Ian Schagun, of the study team, said they were proving more complex than had been expected. "If anything, there are more differ-

ences within the regions than between them, so there is no simple message to convey."

London, for example, regularly fills the top and bottom positions in the annual league table of local authority performance at GCSE. Some outer-London authorities are already close to the Government's targets for the end of the century. Philip Chorley, director of



the National Advisory Council for Education and Training Targets, said: "Existing figures suggest variations as high as 14 percentage points in young people's attainment of qualifications in different parts of the country. This study will help us to identify the reasons behind different levels of achievement, the factors affecting performance which can be controlled and

the best local strategies for making real progress towards the national targets."

Training and Enterprise Councils are required to set local education and training targets. They will be sent the national foundation's report. Despite rising pass rates in public examinations, it is becoming increasingly unlikely that the Government's targets for 2000 will be met. They

require that 80 per cent of 19-year-olds have the equivalent of five higher-grade GCSEs, compared with the present 69 per cent. By the age of 21, 60 per cent are expected to have the equivalent of two A-levels, compared with the present 44 per cent.

Mr Schagun said: "Particularly at GCSE, there are two central factors: prior attainment at primary school and social conditions. When these come together, they make quite a difference."

More than 5,000 schools are suffering shortages of books or equipment which damage the quality of lessons, Labour claims today in an analysis of school inspectors' reports. Almost a quarter of secondary schools and one in eight primaries did not have enough books to teach the curriculum satisfactorily.

The Department for Education blamed school governors for any shortages, saying the central issue was not the size of budgets but their use.

Education, page 24

Labour would try to fill empty flats over shops

If Labour wins the general election, it plans a campaign to fill 100,000 empty high-street flats to combat housing problems, revive town centres and curb late-night shop burglaries. To encourage greater use of residential properties, landlords would lose their 50 per cent reduction on council tax that they now receive if property is empty. Labour would also allow housing associations grant help to renovate and rent high-street flats fallen into disrepair. Labour would put pressure on town planners to ensure that shopping complexes in future include private homes.

Tories apologise for MP slur

The Conservative Party has apologised to Tom Clarke, the shadow Minister for the Disabled, over untrue allegations that he was guilty of "un-American" behaviour. The Tories made the claim before Tony Blair's visit to the United States last spring. They alleged that Mr Clarke was "un-American" for having attended a meeting of a group which opposed Britain's entry to the Gulf War.

Champagne sales effervescent

Shippers of champagne have recorded an increase in sales this year of about 18 per cent over 1995. Sales of vintage champagne remain only a small fraction of the total. Sparkling wines made by the champagne method from Spain, New Zealand and Australia have all showed even higher increases in sales this year than that recorded by champagne.

Police hunt Glasgow sex attacker

Detectives issued an E-fit picture, right, of a man being hunted in connection with ten indecent assaults on lone women over the past 13 months in west Glasgow. The attacks have all occurred between 12.30am and 5am. Police say the women, aged between 19 and 28, were generally followed home and attacked as they were about to enter their homes. None of the women needed hospital treatment in spite of being deeply shocked.



Man killed by hit-and-run driver

A pedestrian on his way home from a Christmas Eve party was killed instantly when he was hit by a stolen car. Mark Chippendale, 24, was flung across the carriageway by the white Ford Fiesta near his home in Medworough, south Yorkshire. The driver did not stop and the car was later found abandoned less than two miles from the scene of the crash and set on fire.

Firemen issue strike warning

Firemen are warning that they could take industrial action in the New Year as part of a campaign to protect jobs and services in the wake of local council budget cuts. The areas likely to be affected include Kent, Essex, Derbyshire, Scotland, Suffolk, Norfolk and Wales. A Fire Brigades Union spokesman said: "If there is the threat of one single redundancy, we have policies in place to deal with it."

Nurses will help smokers to quit

Nurses are to encourage their patients to give up smoking. In a campaign launched yesterday, thousands of nurses have been given guidelines on motivating their patients to quit. Anne Crawford, who is helping to run the campaign for the Royal College of Nursing, said: "Patients frequently turn to nurses for advice and nurses are in the ideal position to help."

RAF Nimrods are stripped down

The RAF's Nimrod submarine hunters are being stripped down at RAF Kinloss, on the Moray Coast, as part of a £2 billion modernisation project. The tails and wings are being cut off so that the fuselages can be put inside an Antonov transporter and flown to British Aerospace in Bournemouth. There, they will be transformed into Nimrod 2000s, which are expected to enter service in 2002.

Christmas card recycling scheme

A nationwide Christmas card recycling scheme has been launched by the Post Office and the Countryside Commission in an attempt to reduce the number that end up dumped in landfill sites. Post Offices will accept the cards throughout January and profits will go to a number of nature conservation groups. At present only 10 per cent of cards are recycled.

Rape accused found hanging

A remand prisoner died after being found hanging in a cell, police said last night. Paul Reilly, 44, from New Orleans, Nottinghamshire, died at Lincoln Prison late on Christmas Eve. He was facing a rape charge and had recently been remanded by Worksop magistrates. A doctor and prison staff tried in vain to revive him.

Adoption

Continued from page 1
adoption is done at all, it needs to be done in the interests of the child. I am sometimes bothered by the way in which adults treat this as if they are actually entitled to adopt children really to gratify their own wishes and the child is regarded as a possession like other possessions."

Patricia Morgan, honorary fellow of the Institute of Economic Affairs, is preparing a report calling for social services to lose control over adoption. "It should have a much higher profile and be considered as a proper choice for young women and girls who get pregnant and do not want to keep the child."

She compares the success of adoption with the failure of the care system. More than 75 per cent leave care with no qualifications; only between 12 and 19 per cent go on to further education; between 50 and 80 per cent are unemployed; 23 per cent make up adult prisoners and 38 per cent of those held in young offender institutions.

The most experienced adoption judge in England says children are being denied the chance of being adopted because social workers strive to keep them with failed natural parents. Thomas Heald said young people were often too old and disturbed to be found adoptive homes because of the delay in accepting that their own families would never cope. "The trouble is adoption has usually been put off for far too long."

The retired circuit judge, who sanctioned 2,500 adoptions in 25 years, said many children were so keen to be adopted that they persuaded their fosterers to become their mothers and fathers by law.

Jim Richards, director of the Catholic Children's Society, an adoption agency, said: "Adoption would be used more if voluntary agencies were involved to a greater extent. It is very different from the 1960s and 1970s when nurses and social workers would almost without exception tell women they were doing the right thing and were good mothers if they gave up a child for adoption."

June Phoburn, professor of social work at East Anglia University, who has advised the Department of Health about adoption reform, said: "It can have long-term mental health problems to give up a baby for adoption. It has similar impact to being sexually assaulted."



The tills were ringing at Ikea in Thurrock, Essex, as shoppers went in search of some Boxing Day bargains

Out-of-town sales get off to an early start

By JONATHAN PRYNN

THE Christmas sales got off to an early start yesterday. Although most department stores are not launching their sales until this morning, and most city centres remained relatively quiet, the bigger out-of-town operations had an unexpected post-Christmas rush. Two thousand people were queuing outside the Ikea furniture store in Brent Park, north

London, well before the shop opened at 10am. John Olie, the manager, said: "It took about an hour to get them all in." As more shoppers arrived, the store became "absolutely heaving", and Mr Olie said that with about 3,000 people inside they closed temporarily for safety reasons. It was a similar story north of the border. In Kirkcaldy, Fife, the manager of the local branch of the Comet electrical store said the shop had

been struggling to cope with the influx of customers. "There have been a lot more people than we'd normally expect. There has been a very large increase in sales on last year. It has been extremely busy," he said. In the deserted West End of London, tourists outnumbered bargain hunters. At one furniture shop on the Edgware Road, the manager was forced to sell a £900 sofa for £1 to drum up business.

Cherie Blair gets 'minder' for election trail

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

CHERIE BLAIR has been assigned her own "minder" for the general election campaign to help to arrange public engagements and field press inquiries.

Fiona Millar, the long-time partner of Alastair Campbell, Tony Blair's press secretary, will help Mrs Blair when she makes public appearances or conducts interviews. Labour Party sources denied that Ms Millar, who has lived with Mr Campbell for more than ten years, would brief journalists on policy issues.

"Cherie is not a politician, she is not having a political role and she doesn't need a spin-doctor," one said. "However, the general election is a huge logistical exercise. Cherie will inevitably be mak-

ing some personal appearances during it and it is not unreasonable that she might require some assistance arranging them."

Ms Millar writes political profiles for the Commons House magazine and used to be a reporter for the Daily Express. She worked for Neil and Glynis Kinnock during the last general election and has already been helping Mrs Blair for two years. Labour are keen that Mrs Blair not be seen in the same way as Hillary Clinton.

Ms Millar and Mr Campbell, a former political editor for the Daily Mirror newspaper, already have a close social and professional relationship with the Blairs. Party sources refused to comment



Cherie Blair and Fiona Millar, who will be on hand to help with Mrs Blair's political roles

on whether Ms Millar was being paid. "Any salary arrangements are a private matter," said one aide.

He also denied that Ms Millar would be organising what Mrs Blair should wear,

but said she would be at hand to field press inquiries on stories focusing on the Labour leader's wife.

Aides also played down the idea that Mrs Blair would have a key role in the general

election, although she has recently been seen at her husband's side on visits to schools and hospitals. Labour is keen to attract the female vote, and feels there is a need to counteract the positive influence of Norma Major.

Mrs Major already has her own "unofficial" press officer who has helped her for the last six months. Eileen Wise, head of news at Conservative Central Office, is responsible for setting up interviews for her and organising public appearances. She also helped Mrs Major promote her book on Chequers.

The Tories clearly intend to give Mrs Major, who has been dubbed Mr Major's "secret weapon", a significant profile during the election campaign in what could emerge as an vital battle for women voters.

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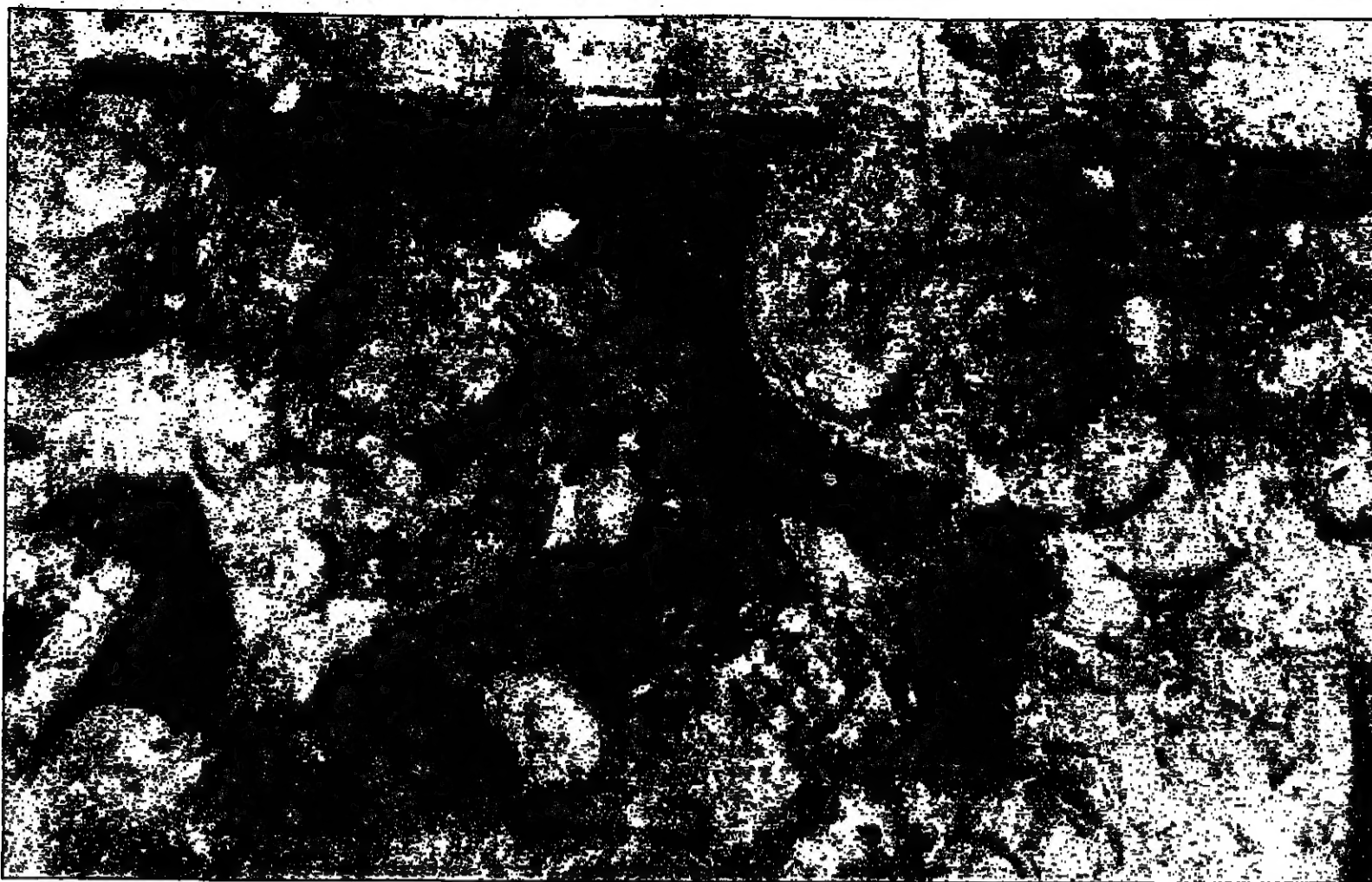
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Scholars hail discovery of 11th-century paintings beneath layers of plaster and ivy in ruined church



The 11th-century frescoes include an angel blowing the Last Trump, left, and a saint holding a dead snake, representing the triumph of good over evil. The discoveries will rewrite art history, one expert says

Hidden frescoes give new picture of Romanesque art



The frescoes were discovered by Bob Davey, a retired engineer

By DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

ROMANESQUE wall paintings identified as the oldest extensive church frescoes in Britain have been discovered by a retired engineer among ivy-covered ruins.

Scholars speak of being breathless with excitement at the find and describe it as a "once-in-a-lifetime experience". One said: "Those few who have been fortunate to see it have come back almost speechless."

The images, which include the oldest depiction of the kind of the Holy Trinity anywhere in Europe, have been found in a remote and dilapidated church in the west of Norfolk. Prophets, saints and a demon figure are among paintings that were concealed for centuries beneath medieval and 17th-century painted plaster and a wall of ivy that had engulfed the roofless building. They were painted about 1090, three years after the death of William the Conqueror.

The find was made by Bob Davey, who has lived locally since 1987, after he noticed patches of red ochre poking through the ivy at the church, reputed to

be haunted, and contacted Norfolk County Council. First, 17th-century biblical texts that had been painted on to the wall in black lettering on white ground were discovered, protected by the ivy for 50 years since the church was last used. Cracks in the plasterwork, however, suggested that there was something else underneath.

The art detectives removed a section and found themselves going back to the 13th century. Again, cracks in the plaster led them to another medieval layer. That was when they made their 1090 find.

David Park, a leading medieval wall paintings scholar at the Courtauld Institute in London, said: "I was astounded when I saw these paintings for the first time." It is estimated that only half the imagery has been uncovered.

The find is all the more important because Henry VIII, the damp British climate and the Victorian penchant for stripping church interiors ensured the obliteration of colourful early Romanesque wall paintings that were once abundant in Britain.

"These are exceptionally early," said Mr Park, explaining that they "rather revolutionise" our knowledge of art from

this period, particularly in the development of subject. History books would need to be rewritten and, for this reason, the frescoes were of international importance, he said.

Stephen Rickerby, a wall paintings conservator, whose clients include the Getty Conservation Institute, said: "It is tremendously exciting. What marks it as special is that quite a lot of Romanesque paintings survive in Britain. They generally date from 1130 to 1150."

The Anglo-Saxons were known to have painted their church walls, but the only example to have survived — in a small church at Nether Wallop in Hampshire, dating from 1000 — is such a small fragment that it pales against this discovery.

Julian Hunt, of English Heritage, which is overseeing the project with the council, said: "If it were in a cathedral, that would be extraordinary enough. The fact that it's in a parish church in the middle of such an isolated spot is quite mind-boggling."

He explained that the drapery was among stylistic features identifying it as very early Romanesque. The compositions on the east gable include the Holy

Trinity with God seated with Christ and the Holy Ghost as a dove.

Mr Park said that the representation of Christ on the Cross before an enthroned God is the earliest known depiction of an image that was to become a standard way of showing that subject throughout Europe in the Middle Ages; until this find, the earliest such composition was a northern French manuscript of 1120.

Also on the east gable is a series of faces gazing up to heaven and busts of saints in roundels, and other figures rising out of coffins at the Resurrection. The west gable bears a demonic figure grasping at what looks like an ankle. There is another scene on the north wall which has yet to be identified; it seems to be a figure of Christ.

Unfortunately, it will be years before the public will be able to see the paintings. Conservation will be a slow process and will not begin until environmental monitoring and pigment analysis, for example, have been conducted. There is also the ethical dilemma of how much to save of the later periods.

Normally, scholars would be delighted to find 13th-century imagery, Mr

Rickerby said, adding that there were at least two medieval layers there. Traces of rare pigments reflect that the painting would be "a ghost of what it was", he said. "But that is to be expected. It may be faint, but it is remarkable."

He added: "The sad thing is that almost every church in England had a scheme like this. We've lost so much. It is such a little church, yet it has an amazing scheme."

English Heritage and Norfolk County Council have shared the £40,000 cost of erecting a roof, making the structure sound and protecting the church from the elements and wildlife. It is part of their extensive work in tackling the ruined churches of Norfolk.

Caroline Babinington, the project's head of wall paintings conservation, said: "The paintings are absolutely stunning, a once-in-a-lifetime experience. To think that they have been tucked away in the middle of nowhere..."

The unnamed church was last in regular service in 1936 but, even then, was in a poor state of repair. Although designated a ruin, it was never officially declared redundant and could be returned to use.

Candid camera catches neighbour dishing dirt on ornamental fish

By IAN KEY

A COUNCIL care worker accused of poisoning 22 ornamental fish during a year-long feud with her neighbour has been fined more than £600. Sylvia Place, 52, was filmed poisoning the water of Marjorie Redford's garden pond by throwing lumps of earth over the fence.

The feud between Mrs Place and Mrs Redford ended in the death of 22 of Mrs Redford's fish, including mirror carp, golden ory, Japanese koi and Israeli koi. A judge at Leeds County Court ordered her to pay damages for the dead fish. To add to her troubles, the 55-year-old Mrs Place was ordered to pay included the cost of hiring the video camera that Mrs Redford used.

Mrs Place, of Kippax, Leeds, admitted throwing dirt in her neighbour's pond, but denied killing the fish. In September last year police cautioned her after she allegedly killed two fish worth £600. In July she received a solicitor's letter alleging the deaths of 17 more fish and a demand for £600 compensation.

After the hearing earlier



The garden pond in which 22 ornamental fish died

this week Mrs Place said: "I threw two handfuls of soil into the pond because I was so annoyed at comments Mrs Redford had been making. I just cannot believe it. There is no justice. Mr Redford claimed that, every time he cleaned the pond, it was full of dirt and debris. The judge came to the conclusion that I had done it at other times, but I hadn't."

Mrs Place's husband, Ron, a hospital porter, said: "The whole thing has made my wife poorly. We have been

married 32 years and she has never been in trouble with the law before."

Two months ago, Mrs Redford sued her other next-door neighbour, Janet Lund, after she filmed her retrieving her six-year-old son's football from the pond with a washing line pole. Mrs Lund, 39, was ordered to pay £27 compensation and £60 costs by a county court judge.

Mrs Lund said: "I had fallen out with them a few weeks before, but then we had problems over Lee's football.

It had gone into the garden a few times but, when he had gone to ask for it back, they had refused."

"I didn't go into their garden. I managed to flip the ball out of the pool and get it back. I couldn't believe it when I got a letter from the Redford solicitor saying I had killed two fish and damaged two water lilies."

Mrs Lund contested the claim, but the judge ordered against her. "I still can't believe what they did. I would have been better off buying Lee a new ball."

Raymond Redford, 43, said that he and wife, 46, a shop assistant, had been advised to buy a security camera because of damage that was being caused. "We caught Mrs Lund retrieving the football and damaging the fish and lilies in it. We took Mrs Place to court after we caught her on film poisoning the fish pond." He said the feud could have begun because neighbours were jealous of extensive improvements to his home. He claimed that as well having fish killed, the family car, a Nissan Bluebird, had had two windows broken and a wing mirror damaged.

Home movie puts burglars in jail

By PAUL WILKINSON

WHEN Kevin O'Hare was burgled for the fourth time, he decided to set up his own spy system to do something about it. In the sitting room of his house, behind an enlarged framed photo of his parents, he installed a tiny closed-circuit spy camera.

When his home was broken into for the fifth time in 16 months, he caught the two thieves on film. One has now been sentenced to eight years in jail, another to two.

Mr O'Hare, 47, of Crosby, near Liverpool, said: "When I played the tape back it was like winning the lottery. I was getting braced off with the thieves. I was determined to stop them. In fact, I was so determined it was getting in the way of my social life."

"I tried parking the car round the corner and sneak-



Kevin O'Hare: filmed thieves burgling his house

ing back so they'd think I was out and I tried laying in wait all night, but they didn't come. Then I hit on this idea. It cost about £1,500 to set it up, but it was well worth it. I couldn't have got a better

result." The property developer said he hoped criminals would be deterred by the thought of being detected.

"I don't think you stop crime by making your house more secure; thieves always find

opportunities. The only way to stop crime is to catch them and punish them. Make an example of them."

Detective Constable Guy Tattersall, the officer in charge of the investigation, said: "It is a fantastic video. I wish every member of the public was in a position to do the same. He has been burgled four or five times and this has done the trick. Some nasty characters are now behind bars."

"If someone could manufacture a cheap and effective device to do the same it would certainly get my backing."

Superintendent Steve Finnigan, his chief at Crosby police station, was more cautious. He said: "It can undoubtedly help us, but I would like to think that it would be part of a more comprehensive package of alarms, locks and Neighbourhood Watch."

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Arson inquiry pair lost twins in earlier fire

By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

A YOUNG couple arrested after a woman died and two of her children were badly burnt in an apparent arson attack lost two of their own children in an accidental fire three years ago.

Magistrates yesterday gave police a further 29 hours to question Anthony and Sue Watkiss. The couple were arrested within an hour of the 2am fire in a terraced house on a council estate in Bushbury, Wolverhampton.

Mr and Mrs Watkiss, both 28, are understood to live next door to the dead woman. Three years ago they lost their 16-month twins, Philip and Martin, in a fire started when two of their children, aged four and five, set fire to paper at their former home.

Neighbours in Stanley Road said the couple had appeared on the BBC1 programme 999 Lifesavers and relived the tragedy in which their twin sons died. A BBC spokesman said the programme last Thursday had included "a special report on how firefighters were being trained to counsel children who start fires".

Detective Superintendent Sandy Craig, leading the investigation into the blaze which engulfed the terraced house early on Christmas Day, said: "In the two or three

weeks before the attack police were called to Stanley Road on two occasions after being called out by two rowing families.

"When officers arrived the altercation had stopped and we left it at that after talking to both parties. At this stage we cannot reveal what the rows were about."

Michelle Bone-Knell, 34, died in the arson attack and her children Chantel, 2½, and Damian, 18 months, were critically injured. Her common law husband, Graham Perrins, 33, escaped by jumping from a first-floor window. Ms Bone-Knell was found in a rear bedroom. She died from 80 per cent burns and smoke inhalation. Damian was found in his cot and Chantel under the cot.

They were revived by firefighters. Damian suffered 50 per cent burns, mainly to his back, and is expected to be operated on today at Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham. Chantel was taken off a ventilator at Birmingham Children's Hospital, where her condition was described as serious.

Mr Perrins suffered lacerations to his arms and 5 per cent burns. He was transferred to a specialist eye hospital yesterday.



The Boxing Day dip at Seaburn and, below, a Russian woman dropping into a river north of Moscow in temperatures of -25C



Brass band plays along as brass monkeys take dip in North Sea

EIGHT hundred people plunged into the sea yesterday with thousands cheering them on, as a brass band playing and a fire brigade crew hosing down those who did not look wet enough. Undaunted by the frost, they converged on Seaburn, Sunderland's seaside resort, and raised £18,600 for a wide range of charities.

The annual dip, organised by the Sunderland Lions Club, is the biggest event of its kind in the country. The bathers, many going in as

teams and in fancy dress, raised a further £800 for the local lifeboat station through a collection on the beach.

Stuart Kohn, who was master of ceremonies, said: "It may be extremely cold but the warm-hearted people of Wearside keep making this bigger and better every year. Everyone has a great time and although we had survival bags on hand in case anyone went down with hypothermia, not a single one was needed."

A group from St Wilfrid's

Church, Moorside, Sunderland, went as monks — with plenty of warm clothing under their habits. The Rev Paul Walker, who led the group of five swimmers, said: "It still felt very cold. I did it last year and wouldn't have missed it for anything this year. We'll be back next time."

They were not as hardy, however, as Russian winter bathers, who think nothing of cutting a hole in the ice and jumping in to escape air temperatures of -25C.

Rugby team takes record for game's biggest rout

By ROBIN YOUNG

THE 177-3 drubbing handed out to a plucky rugby club by their rather superior neighbours was officially confirmed by The Guinness Book of Records yesterday the biggest defeat in the English game.

Norwich's victory in the quarter-finals of the NatWest Norfolk Cup over Eccles and Attleborough was hardly unexpected because Norwich are acknowledged one of the best sides in East Anglia, members of the London League's Division One, and only one step below the National League.

The 113-year-old club turned semi-professional at the start of the season. Its ground has four pitches and there are 140 playing members. The club's top team is currently third in its league and pushing hard for promotion.

Eccles and Attleborough is probably the smallest club in the league with a player list of just 40. They are in the fifth division of the Norfolk League and have no clubhouse, changing in a local pub.

The match is the highest winning margin between two 15-a-side club teams in England. The previous record was set in 1980 when the Army's Seventh Signals Regiment defeated 4th Armoured Workshops in Germany 174-0. The world record is 194-0 in Denmark in 1973.

BBC claims 8 out of 10 top shows

By CAROL MIDDLEY

THE BBC claimed an overwhelming victory over ITV in the battle for Christmas Day television viewers. Eight of its shows made the top ten.

Only Fools and Horses, the BBC's main attraction, had 18.7 million viewers, while a bonus edition of EastEnders came in second with 15.9 million. The dinosaur film Jurassic Park, also shown by the BBC, was third, watched by 14.5 million viewers.

ITV could manage only seventh place with Coronation Street, which drew in 9.4 million viewers, six million fewer than EastEnders. A BBC source said it was the largest-ever Christmas gap between EastEnders and Coronation Street, which has been criticised recently for poor scripts.

An ITV spokeswoman said: "Christmas is the time when the BBC traditionally goes for broke and transmits all its top-rating shows and major movies in order to dominate the ratings."

Coronation Street was up against Jurassic Park, one of the most popular movies of all time. EastEnders was up against Des O'Connor which, without wanting to criticise

Des, isn't quite the same as Jurassic Park."

The figures for Only Fools and Horses, about the antics of two Peckham dealers Del and Rodney, are higher than the 16.8 million who watched last year's leading comedy, One Foot in the Grave. The show, the first of three hour-long specials over the festive season, was the first new episode for three years. There were fears that the cast would not make any other episodes, but the starring actors, David Jason and Nicholas Lyndhurst, said they might consider bringing back the characters if there was enough public demand.

The Vicar of Dibley took fourth place with 14.5 million viewers, followed by Auntie's All-New Christmas Bloomers at 13 million and Animal Hospital Goes West with 9.5 million. The Queen's Christmas message on BBC1 was watched by 9.1 million viewers and Noel's Christmas Presents attracted 9 million viewers. In tenth place was Des O'Connor's Christmas Night With The Stars on ITV with 8.2 million.

Today's viewing, page 39

Give a child a taste but not a full drink



RICHARD BRIERS'S morning readings on Radio 4 of the autobiography of his friend Paul Eddington, who died this year, made a pleasant start to the Christmas holiday.

Eddington's life story has provided a few stories of medical interest but, long before he posed the diagnostic conundrum of the intermittent pain in his hip, or gave us the history of his mycosis fungoides, the rare but slowly lethal form of T-cell lymphoma, his listeners were left feeling thankful that he survived his mother's social life.

In his early childhood, his mother ran a salon for local intellectuals. Her guests drank sherry before the evening began. He soon found that his mother's friends did not finish their sherry and that, after they had moved rooms to hear the evening speaker, there was a rich supply of dregs left in the glasses.

Children may be offered a taste of adult drinks so that they grow up with the idea that drinking is part of everyday life and not a mysterious vice, but parents should know that alcohol has particular danger when taken in excess by a young child.

Children frequently behave like Paul Eddington and mimic adults by finishing any

glasses which have not been emptied. Other children raid the sideboard when no one in authority is about. Alcohol should be kept out of reach of children, for when a small child takes too much alcohol the blood-sugar level rises alarmingly quickly, inducing an outpouring of insulin from the pancreas.

The pancreas overdoes the insulin production and, as a result, the blood sugar then falls to dangerously low levels, producing hypoglycaemia. The blood sugar can fall so far that the child loses consciousness and may even die. If unconsciousness has been brought on, patients of whatever age will require a glucose drip.

Most adults suffer lesser effects of hypoglycaemia as part of a hangover. Hypoglycaemia is partly responsible for the sweating, headaches, shakes and memory loss the next day — hence the value of taking a hearty breakfast to counteract it, if the drinker can face one.

The only adults who are likely to suffer dangerous symptoms of hypoglycaemia after drinking are those who, like some homeless people, are severely malnourished.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

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Children frequently behave like Paul Eddington and mimic adults by finishing any

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French crack down on 'excesses of the slopes'

Dangerous skiers face jail after two die in crashes

BY ADAM SAGE
IN PARIS
AND IAN MURRAY

RECKLESS skiers who cause accidents in France could end up in jail after two people died on the slopes last weekend. As the Alpine ski resorts prepare for their busiest week of the year, the French judicial authorities say they are prepared to fine and imprison skiers responsible for collisions.

"I don't want to have to put people in jail, but I will not hesitate to do so if it is necessary," said René Ternoy, the Albertville State Prosecutor who is responsible for enforcing the law in many of the French resorts. "Skiers are going faster and faster and paying less and less attention to others, and the injuries we are seeing now are like road accident injuries."

Guy Drut, the French Sports Minister, yesterday condemned the "increasing individualism" of skiers and told other French prosecutors to take an equally hard line with "excesses on the slopes". He announced that he would introduce a law in the spring enabling police to prosecute people for "reckless ski-ing", just as reckless drivers can be charged.

The two skiers who died were both French, one a ten-year-old boy hit by a young man training for a competition in Courcheval, a resort popular with Britons. According to M Ternoy, the boy was ski-ing "where he should have been, on an easy slope accompanied by his family when he was struck by a skier going at full speed".

In the second fatal accident, at Tignes, a 76-year-old man died when he collided with another skier at a junction between two runs. "They both tried to get across first and didn't make it," M Ternoy said.

Jean Zimmer, a guide with Top Ski in Val-d'Isère, said recent accidents were increasing pressure for legislation, but that there was no real need for it. "You cannot stop this happening, with laws. It has always been like this and we do not need to copy the Americans and impose speed limits. The problem is increasing because there are more people on the slopes and above

SAFETY ON THE SLOPES

There are no general regulations covering skiing safety but most winter sport countries impose some controls.

■ **Switzerland:** fines can be imposed under criminal laws against reckless skiing, but laws vary from canton to canton.

■ **Austria:** no specific laws and difficult to impose nationally as each of the eight provinces is responsible for its own laws. Some Tyrolean resorts have recently introduced piste patrolers to help skiers. They also warn reckless skiers to slow down.

■ **Italy:** No specific laws but charges of criminal assault or manslaughter could follow a ski collision.

■ **America:** Some states have laws with up to two years' imprisonment and \$5,000 fines for reckless skiing. Patrolers have the power to confiscate lift tickets. Some resorts use speed guns to measure fast skiers.

■ **Canada:** British Columbia and Quebec have laws with fines for reckless skiing but all resorts rely on patrols, who have the power to confiscate ski lift passes.

all there is the difficulty in coping with the growing numbers on snowboards.

"They are dangerous because they have a totally different trajectory to a skier. When there are a lot of them about it is safer to ski off piste with a guide than to stay on the main runs."

He is backing a private member's bill introduced by Pierre Pascalon, the deputy for Isère, and now before the National Assembly. It seeks to force snowboarders and skiers to use different runs. According to M Pascalon, ski-ing is now as dangerous as motorcycling with 115,000 people injured in France each year. He says three quarters of all collisions are caused by snowboarders, even though they represent only 20 per cent of all those using the slopes.

The tough stance promised by the French authorities represents a radical change of policy since 1993, when a French skier who hit and killed Nicola Jones, an 18-year-old Briton, in Tignes, escaped with a £350 fine and a suspended jail sentence. The law allows for skiers to be prosecuted where they are responsible for an accident. The maximum jail sentence for manslaughter is three years and two years for causing injury.

In North America, where skiing is generally more regulated than in Europe, most states have tough legislation against recklessness and resorts are patrolled by profes-

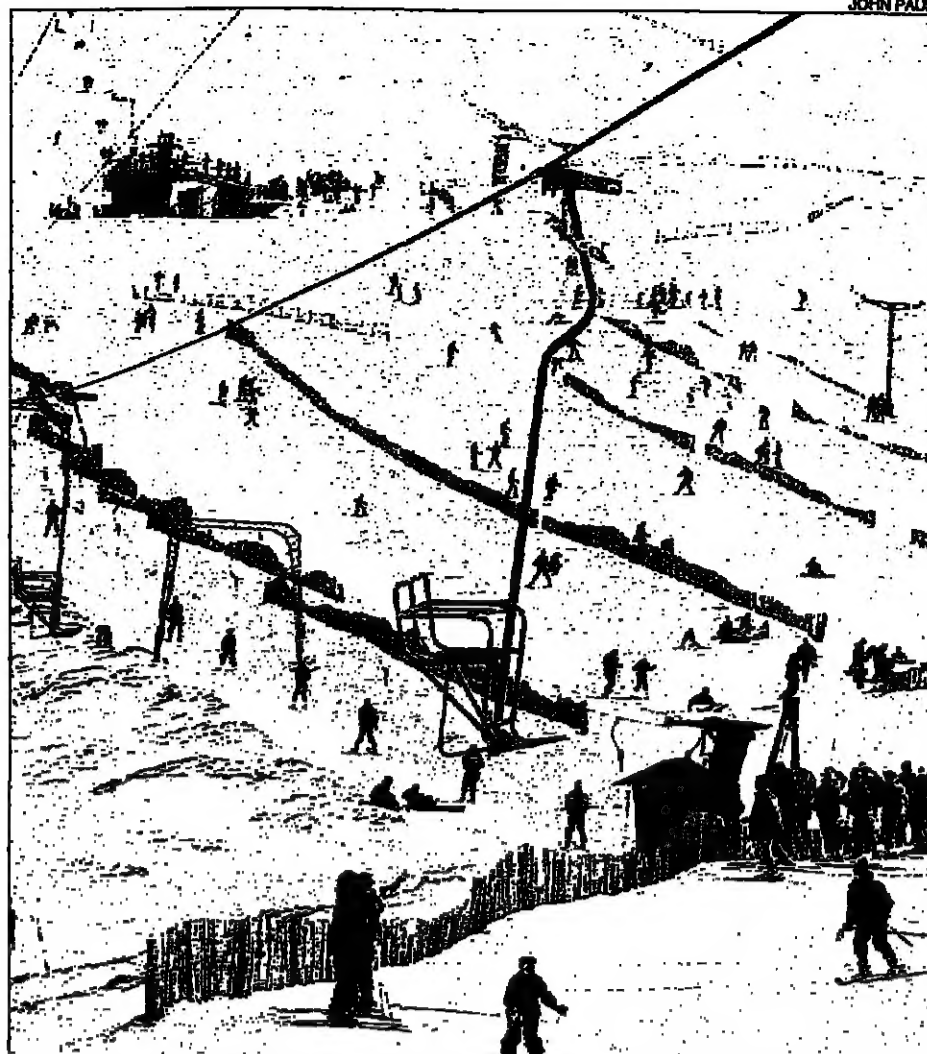
sionals who have the power to confiscate lift passes from dangerous skiers. In Colorado, a skier who injures someone while out of control is charged with third degree assault, which can mean a two year prison sentence and fines

of up to \$5,000 (£3,000). "As far as I know there has only ever been one prosecution which resulted in someone being imprisoned," Lynn Bronikowski, of Colorado Ski Country, said. "That is because we lay the emphasis on safety first and fun second. In Europe you have a long way to go to catch us up on safety." Confiscation of passes that can cost up to \$1,200 (£750) a season is a serious deterrent.

On Mammoth Mountain in California, offenders are made to watch a video of ski-ing accident victims before they can get their pass back.

Dr Graham Plant, a radiologist from Basingstoke, Hampshire, on holiday in Val-d'Isère, agreed that recklessness was a problem in Europe, "especially after lunch when people have had a few beers. For that reason a lot of parents prefer to go to America where it is better regulated and safer."

Snow reports, page 26



Cairn Gorm yesterday, where fresh snow brought hundreds to the slopes

Snow on the hills, but ice on the roads

A FRESH fall of snow yesterday brought thousands of skiers on to the slopes in parts of Scotland while ice made road conditions treacherous throughout Britain.

Hundreds enjoyed a day of snowboarding and skiing on the slopes of Cairn Gorm, near Aviemore. At the White Corries centre in Glen Coe there was a dusting of fresh snow in the morning on a firm base.

Some light snowfalls are expected today, edging south across England and Wales. They will be generally light and confined to higher ground in the east.

Treacherous conditions on busy roads caused heavy delays. Two women died in an accident on the A428 on the border between Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire and a woman passenger was killed when two cars collided in Peterborough in the early hours. Police have urged drivers to take extra care on treacherous roads, with more ice expected.

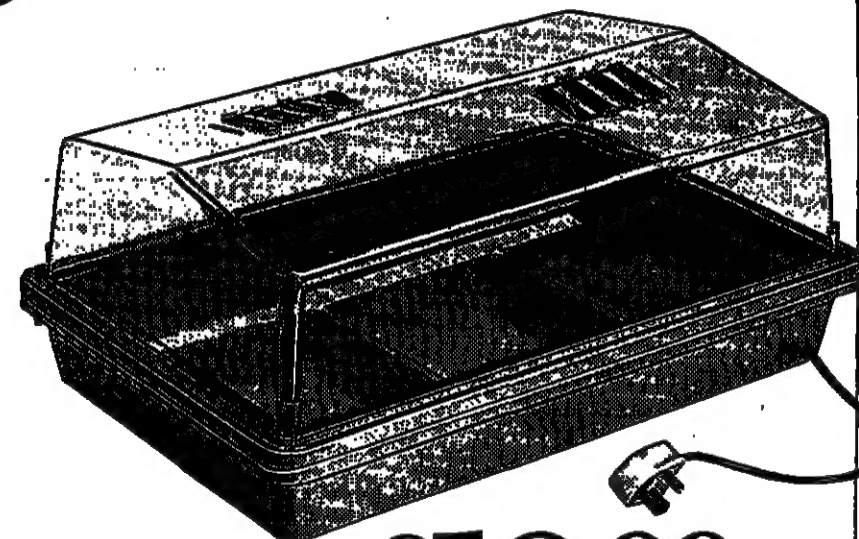
Forecast, page 20

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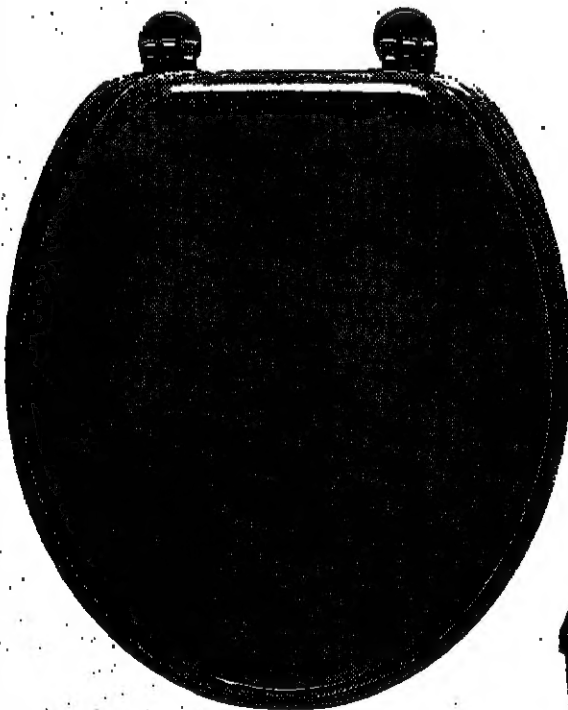
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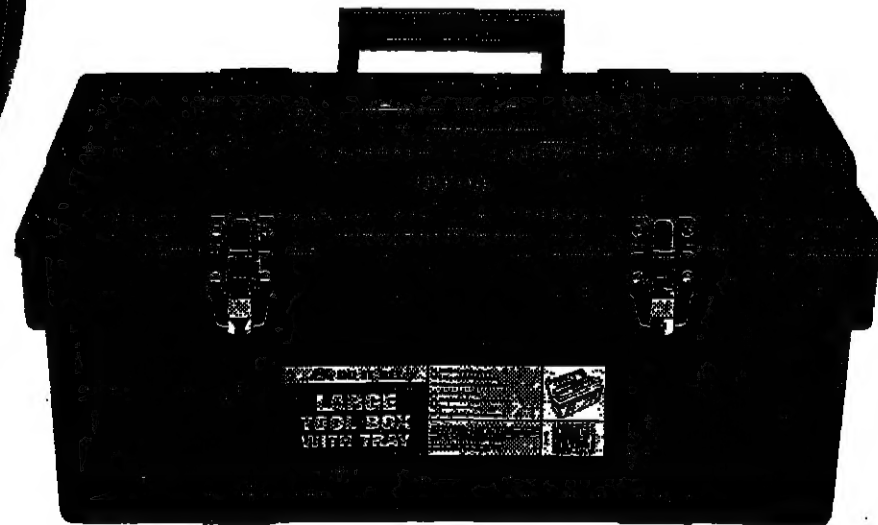
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Latest equipment is no substitute for experience



Martin Bell, Britain's most successful downhill ski racer, argues that greater speed brings with it a need for greater responsibility

THE desire to emulate downhill racers may provide motivation for reckless skiing but the reasons behind it probably lie more in the preparation of groomed slopes and modern equipment.

Poor snow conditions a few years ago persuaded many ski areas to install more artificial snow cannons to guarantee skiing, but on a surface that is harder and less forgiving. When conditions are good, as at present, the smoothness and width of modern prepared runs can give skiers greater confidence and disguise their true speed. I remember from downhill racing that 70mph, on a well prepared course with good visibility, can feel quite slow and controlled - until something goes wrong.

Following an extremely popular introduction in America last season, this year sees the first mass distribution in Europe of a radically new design "carving" skis, also known as "super sidecut", "parabolic", "hourglass" or "shaped" skis.

A carving ski possesses a much wider tip and tail at either end, and a narrow waist beneath the ski boot - ironically a feature that was borrowed from snowboarding, the greatest threat to the ski manufacturing industry in

recent years. The great curvature of the edge helps less skilled and experienced recreational skiers to perform the "carved turn", developed by racers as a means of changing direction without losing speed. This season more skiers than ever will be carving high speed turns, while lacking the experience to read the situation ahead of them and take instant evasive action.

In recent years, snowboarders have been convenient scapegoats for many incidents on the slopes, but while it is true that they are generally younger than skiers, snowboarding organisations are educating snowboarders to be safer.

Whenever the British ski team trained through slalom or downhill courses, we would always take care to do so in a fenced off area. However, accidents can always happen: one afternoon, after finishing training, we saw a group leave a mountain hut, duck under the fence, and attempt to ski down our downhill training course.

Before we could stop them, one of them had flown off our jump and broken both his legs. When we arrived on the scene, we could smell the schnapps on their breath.

Christmas is the busiest time on the slopes, and therefore the most difficult time to persuade a ski area to allocate any team a closed run for training. Some irresponsible racers will always go ahead and set a course on a public run anyway.

Ever greater dangers loom, not just on the piste but off piste as well: the new macho culture of "extreme skiing", defined as "fall and you die", is encouraging cliff jumping and the descents of steep gradients.



By MARCUS BINNEY

The cella of the Bassae

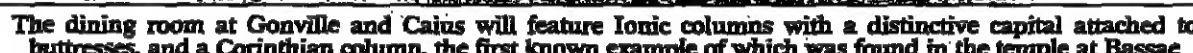


temple was unusual in having fluted Ionic columns attached to buttresses projecting from the wall. These columns had a distinctive arched version of the usual Ionic scroll capital, which Cockerell turned into a signature on many of his buildings. Mr Simpson said: "The Bassae temple also had the first known example of the Corinthian column, which we have reproduced at the end of the room."

While Cockerell was studying the remains of the temple,

The new dining room is a second major development at the college. Mr McKendrick said: "When I was elected Master I decided to buy my-

Dr David Watkin, the Cambridge architectural historian, said: "Simpson's design demonstrates the endless adaptability of the classical language. It's not a straitjacket as modernists often suggest."



By RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

The authority has made the proposal to the Commons Home Affairs Committee, which is investigating the alleged influence of Masons in the police and judiciary.

Mr Bennett, who has never been a Freemason, gave warning that requiring officers to register their membership "could be the thin end of the wedge". He said: "If it starts with Freemasons, where does

The deputy chairman of the Police Complaints Authority, the former MP John Cartwright, said that, until a statutory register was created, officers should be asked to declare on their personal files whether they were a member of a Masonic lodge. This would start "to dismantle this culture of secrecy which we think is harmful to the police."

Lord Justice Millett, a Court of Appeal judge, said yesterday that his membership of the Freemasons had nothing to do with his job as a judge.

EARLS COURT 3-12 JAN

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College sacks pair in sick leave row

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A FURTHER education college has sacked its chief executive and a director after claims that they had been running a pub while on sick leave. Neil Preston, the £90,000-a-year head of Stoke-on-Trent College, and Helen Chandler, its director of marketing, had been off work since the end of September.

The college, one of the largest in the country with 21,000 students and about 1,300 staff, set up a committee to investigate allegations that the two had been working at the Dymock Arms pub in Penley, Clwyd, while on sick leave for stress-related illnesses. After a series of meetings, officials announced on Christmas Eve that both had been dismissed without notice.

Kevin Farrell, chairman of the college's governing corporation, said: "The corporation members felt, after receiving their report, that this was the correct and appropriate action to take."

The lecturers' union Natfhe, whose members had criticised Mr Preston's management style, welcomed the decision. The union had carried out a staff survey after receiving several complaints from lecturers, whose morale was said to be very low. A union official said: "I don't think the two could have gone back to the college and operated successfully. Some 90 per cent of the staff were critical of Mr Preston and there were loads of complaints about bullying and dictatorial style. The staff were very against them."

Mr Preston moved from a Buckinghamshire college, where Mrs Chandler was his deputy, to Stoke-on-Trent in 1993. She followed him in 1994. Doctors' sick notes for the pair were received in September and cover the period up to early next month. But it was then claimed they had been renovating the Dymock Arms for about three months. Mrs Chandler was said to have told customers that turnover had trebled in 12 weeks.

Mr Preston and Mrs Chandler could not be contacted for comment. At the Dymock Arms, Iwan Jones said he had been appointed manager two months ago.

Sisters embark on modelling careers after screen debut in The Odyssey



Sister act: Nisha Hinde, left, and Nishan in Francis Ford Coppola's film of *The Odyssey*. From top, the twins aged eight months, eight years and in the Brownies



Twin sirens postpone university for the catwalk

BY CAROL MIDDLEY

TWIN sisters who found stardom after being cast in a Hollywood film of Homer's *The Odyssey* said yesterday that they were postponing their university studies to become models.

Nisha and Nishan Hinde, 18, have been signed by the fashion houses DKNY, Ghost and Red or Dead only four months after passing three A Levels. The sisters, who have a Fijian Indian mother and English father, are both 6ft tall.

They were recruited to play the seductive sirens in Francis Ford Coppola's film because of their distinctive looks. They travelled to

Turkey to make the film with the actresses Greta Scacchi and Isabella Rossellini.

Yesterday, at their family home in Stroud, Gloucestershire, they said they had been deluged with offers of modelling work and had already appeared in *Vogue* and *Cosmopolitan*. They have left home to rent a flat together in London after being signed by Storm, the model agency which "discovered" Kate Moss. However, their mother, Janita, 44, hopes that they will take up their places to read media studies at Exeter University next year.

Nishan said: "We can't believe what has happened to us in just a few months and, because we are

enjoying it so much and financially it has been so good, it is an opportunity we can't miss. We auditioned and got the part of two sirens, which was amazing."

"We only knew we were going to Milan the day before, and the filming in Turkey was at a week's notice. We have been in loads of magazines and advertisements and, even though we had our doubts about London, people have been so nice we now feel comfortable with it."

"Storm keep us pretty busy—and keep an eye on us—and we have lots of family in London. It's been fantastic to get back to see the family here for Christmas as we

haven't seen them as much as we'd like recently." Most of the twins' work is as a double act. "We do pretty much everything together, although we have separate friends," Nishan said. "Fortunately, we get on really well. The future's very open at the moment."

"It all depends how this year goes. I think if and when we do stop it will be a joint decision. I can't imagine one of us going off to university without the other. The New Year is looking brilliant. We are off to Düsseldorf on the catwalk in January. I would recommend anybody finding themselves in our situation to do the same."

Sarah Douglas, head of Storm,

said: "They are two of the most exciting girls I have ever seen. They are already approaching super-model status and, if they want to continue in this business, there is nothing they can't achieve."

"I took one look at Nisha and Nishan and signed them immediately. They are absolutely gorgeous and are totally natural. They walk like dreams and they have bodies to die for."

"People are going mad for them. Twins can be a novelty, but usually one is a little better than the other. With Nishan and Nisha there isn't that problem, which makes them unique. They are so gorgeous they stop traffic."

Donations for charity are stolen

Thieves stole food and clothing collected by a charity for distribution to the hungry, elderly and handicapped in Russia. They broke into two lorry trailers parked outside a hall being used as a collection point at Seven Mile Strait, near Templepatrick, Co Antrim. Last year, diesel from trucks was syphoned off the night before the Eschol Trust convoy set off on the trip and in 1992 about £2,000 worth of goods were stolen.

Couple die in fire

An elderly couple died in a fire despite their grandson's attempt to rescue them. William George, who was in his eighties, could not be revived after being carried from the flat in Plymouth by David Hayworth, 24. He could not reach Mr George's wife, Vera, 83.

Castle closed

Nottingham Castle will be closed to the public until Monday after a burst water main sent boulders from the castle cliff tumbling on to a city street below. Police said: "It was lucky it was a quiet day, otherwise someone might have been injured."

Teenager returns

A teenager missing for more than three months returned home on Christmas Eve. Kirsty Melivar, 15, vanished from her home in Gourock, Strathclyde, on September 17. No reason for her disappearance or where she has been staying has been given.

Trouser thieves

Thieves stole 30 pairs of trousers while two rugby teams were out on the pitch. Cash and valuables worth £1,200 were stolen from a side from Billingham, Stockton-on-Tees, and from another team playing five miles at Seaton Carew.

Dog in a flap

Firemen had to cut free a 12-stone St Bernard after its head became stuck in a cat flap. Three-year-old Freddie was trapped in the door for four hours after trying to chase the family cat into the garden of their owner's house in Basingstoke, Hampshire.

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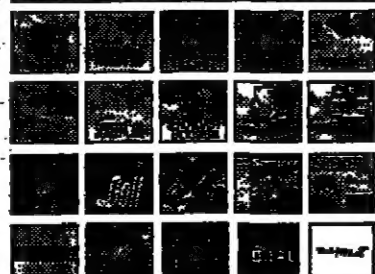
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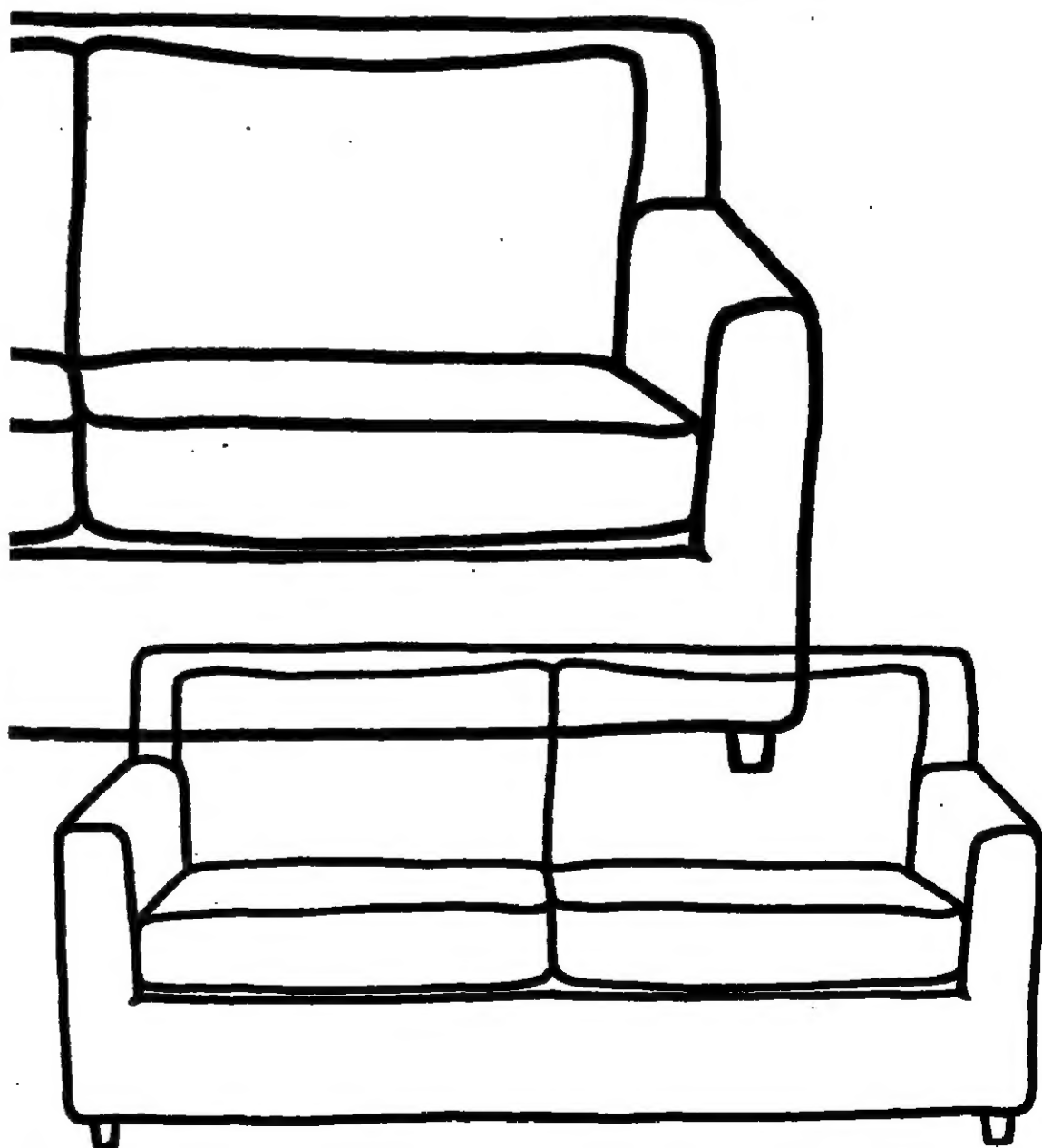
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Mink lose ground as otters return to the riverbank

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

OTTERS are putting the alien mink to rout on Britain's riverbanks. In the process, they are throwing a lifeline to their small and endangered neighbour, the water vole.

Studies by the Northumbrian Wildlife Trust show that growth in the otter population in northeast England is going hand in hand with a decline in the numbers of predatory wild mink. "As otters declined, mink tended to move into their territory," Lisa Kerslake, the trust's conservation manager said. "But where otters and mink are in competition for the same habitat, the otters will win out. We have seen some quite dramatic falls in mink numbers where otters are on the increase."

Mink were introduced to Britain from North America in the 1920s to be reared for their fur. Many escaped from farms to establish themselves on riverbanks, where they proved efficient predators capable of pursuing water voles into the water and even into their burrows.

In a survey last year on all the main rivers in Northumbria, the trust found signs of otter presence at 70 per cent of the sites visited, compared with only 23 per cent four years earlier. Otter recovery was particularly good on the



Mink took advantage of the otter's decline

Till, Aln, Coquet, Wansbeck and Tyne.

The otter, once close to extinction, has been returning to other parts of England. A study published earlier this year by the Vincent Wildlife Trust looked at 3,188 sites all over England and found strong evidence that otters were recolonising long-deserted haunts.

In the course of the study, researchers revisited many sites that had been monitored in an earlier survey in the late 1970s. Twenty-three per cent of these sites showed signs of being occupied by otters, compared with only 6 per cent two decades ago.

Otters are elusive at the best

of times and betray their presence mainly by their paw prints and their black, tar-like droppings, known as spraints. The creatures were seen as pests by anglers and were hunted with dogs until well after the Second World War.

During the 1950s and 1960s, organochlorine pesticides such as DDT, dieldrin and aldrin took a heavy toll, draining off arable fields into rivers and accumulating in the fatty tissue of eels, the otter's favourite food. The chemicals slowly gathered in the bodies of the otters themselves, impairing their ability to reproduce.

Philip Wayne, founder of the Otter Trust at Earsham, Norfolk, said the banning of such pesticides has probably been the single biggest reason for the creatures' recovery. "Even in a heavily farmed area such as East Anglia, where otters were down to single figures at one point, there are now several hundred," he said.

Otters were also affected by the tidying of riverbanks, but more ecologically sensitive management has helped to improve their habitat and that of other riverine creatures, such as the water vole, the much-loved Rat of Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows*.



The orphaned otter cub, named Jarvis, safely in the hands of Jane Jones at her home near Brecon

Orphaned cub thought it was a duck

LIFE can be confusing for a baby otter without a mother. For a three-month-old cub, called Jarvis by its rescuers, it led to an identity crisis.

After its mother was killed by a car the tired and hungry infant was discovered waddling after a duck. Yesterday the orphaned cub was being cared for by members of a mid-Wales wildlife group, who had found it chasing the reluctant foster parent.

The group had launched a two-day search for the otter after its mother was

found dead on the A40 near the River Usk outside Brecon. Powys, Russell, administrator of Brecknock Wildlife Trust that helped to organise the search, said: "From the results of the autopsy we could tell that the mother had had a litter very recently. The otter group members used their knowledge of the river to try to find the cubs but there was no sign of them."

Then, by a stroke of luck, someone saw Jarvis chasing after a duck waddling down a lane. After spending four

days on his own he was tired, hungry and confused — and he probably thought the duck was his mother.

Jarvis was handed to Gareth and Jane Jones, otter group members, and is now being fed on small fish. In the new year it will be taken to an otter sanctuary in Scotland. It is hoped that six to nine months later it can be returned to the banks of the Usk. Mr Jones, of Llangorse, near Brecon, said: "He's a very friendly and inquisitive creature. We'll all miss him when he goes."

Criminal experts to test saintly mystery

By A STAFF REPORTER

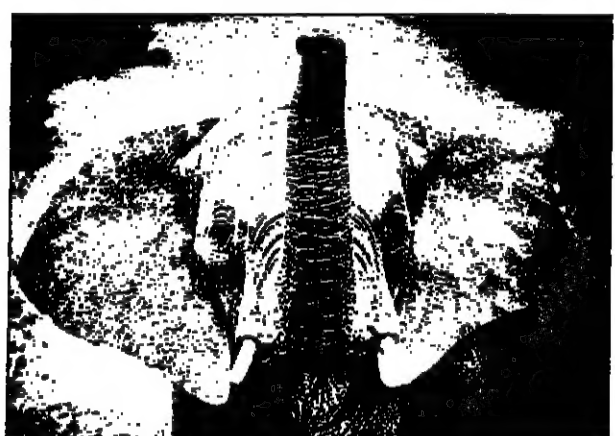
A TEAM of criminal pathologists is to examine a casket of bones to try to determine whether they are those of St David, the patron saint of Wales. The casket was discovered by workmen behind the high altar of St David's Cathedral in the last century.

Church authorities have given permission for Professor Bernard Knight and the surgeon Colin Dent, who both worked on the Frederick and Rosemary West murders, to take part in the investigation. They will use the methods they employed to identify the Wests' victims to find out if the bones belonged to St David. DNA tests will be compared with those carried out on the saint's mother, St Non, who is buried in France.

The casket has been taken to Oxford University where scientists at Keele College will date the bones using a radio-carbon accelerator unit.

Dr Len Noakes, one of the scientists working on the project, said: "I would love to think they are the bones of St David. He was reputedly a tall man and our early findings show the bones belonged to a man over 6ft tall."

St David died in either 589 or 590 after preaching on a pilgrimage through Wales and England. According to legend he died on March 1, St David's Day.



The African elephant in danger, despite ivory ban

Ivory poachers prey on greed and ignorance

By DANIEL MCGRORY

WITH guns and machetes, African villagers slaughtered an entire herd of 330 elephants, including many pregnant females and calves.

The poaching gang who organised the kill in the Moudou Forest on Congo's border with Gabon had persuaded the locals they were doing nothing wrong, as the international ban on the ivory trade was to be lifted.

Sue Fisher, head of conservation for the charity Tusk Force, which backs anti-poaching projects, said: "Once there is even a rumour that the ban is to be lifted, the poachers waste no time. The network is in place, from those who track elephants to the men with the guns, the smugglers and the ivory carvers." She added: "When one nation proposes lifting the ban, others suffer. In 1994, Sudan wanted a relaxation and elephants were poached as far away as India."

Before the ban was imposed, in 1989, the number of African elephants had more than halved. Even now the poaching continues and fewer than 580,000 remain.

Zimbabwe, Namibia and Botswana are arguing that next year's conference of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites) should lift the ban. Zimbabwe, which is

hosting the conference, has been embarrassed by revelations that up to a third of the ivory it has stockpiled has vanished and that some of it has been smuggled to the Far East, where the trade is still thriving. The demand for ivory has all but collapsed in Europe and America, now that the conservationists' message has got through.

The rangers who protect the animals are outnumbered and outgunned by gangs with automatic weapons. In the first half of 1996, three rangers from the Namibian National Parks and Wildlife Service were killed and two seriously wounded and 578 guns, 5,000 wire snares and 223 tusks seized. In Namibia there is so little funding for law enforcement against rhinoceros poachers that rangers have kept suspects in their homes until they could take them to court.

Swaziland lost 70 per cent of its wildlife between 1987 and 1992, and 30 rangers have been recruited to protect the remaining elephants and rhinos. The chief ranger, Petros Ngomane, has survived being shot at and having petrol bombs thrown into his home. Ms Fisher said: "Without their dedication there is no doubt that many species would be extinct in many parts of the world."

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Clinton to throw down gauntlet on balancing budget

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Clinton is preparing to seize the initiative in next year's budget battle with a plan to balance the books by 2002 and also deliver tax relief.

Sceptical Republicans who hold a majority in Congress are waiting for details of his plan before offering their own. The President had invited them to join the deliberations last month, but they turned him down. White House budget officials and Mr Clinton have pressed ahead in recent days to fashion their own proposals.

The two sides are unlikely to be as confrontational as a year ago, when deadlock over trying to eliminate the budget deficit led to the Republicans twice shutting down the government, a tactic that came back to haunt them during the election.

Without any similar campaign pressures, Mr Clinton and the Republicans ought to find common ground more in common, although there will undoubtedly be fights over how to achieve them.

Mr Clinton's aim is to protect government entitlements for the elderly and the needy while giving tax breaks to the middle class. Republicans will also claim to have

taxpayers' interests at heart, but will fight to retain welfare cuts that they forced on a reluctant Mr Clinton last August.

Mr Clinton is expected to step boldly into the welfare controversy by proposing to restore \$16 billion (£9 billion) of the \$35 billion that was chopped out. One option would allow immigrant children to remain eligible for welfare benefits. Mr Clinton will also try again to rein in Medicare, the national health service for the elderly that is threatened with bankruptcy — but with less draconian savings than the Republicans want.

His new budget, due to be unveiled early in February, will propose \$130 billion in tax relief over the next five years, including a \$500 per child tax credit, deductions to pay for college expenses and elimination of capital gains taxes on sales of homes worth less than \$500,000.

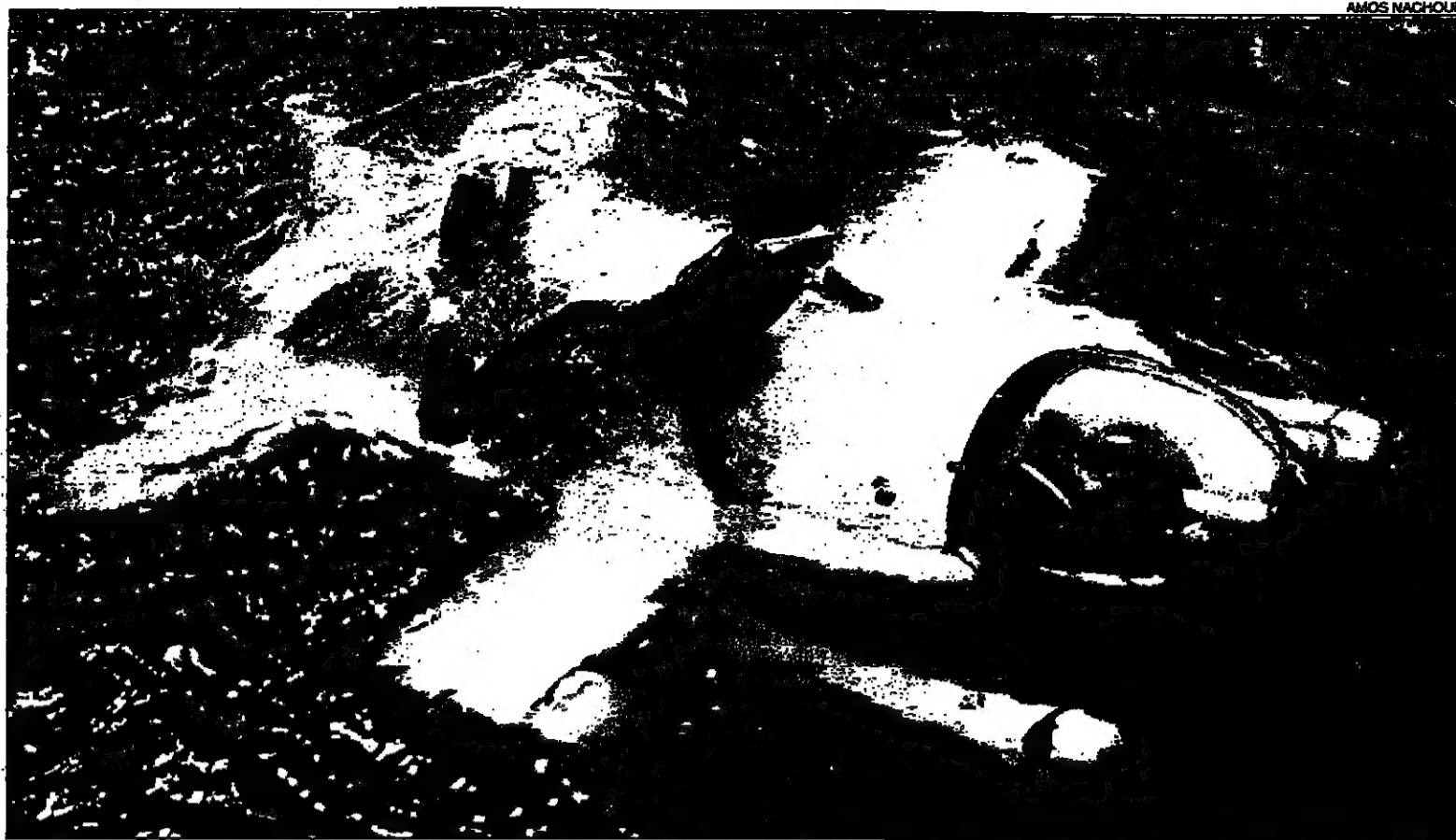
All these ideas were proposed by Mr Clinton during his campaign for re-election. He persuaded voters they were better for the economy than Bob Dole's more generous 15 per cent tax cut. But the benefits may only be temporary, because the Clinton bud-

get includes a controversial "trigger" mechanism that would eliminate certain tax breaks in 2001 to ensure balancing the budget by 2002.

The President proposed a similar device last year and was attacked by Republicans who saw the equivalent of a conjuror's trick in offering the promise of tax relief only to make it disappear. They portrayed him as unwilling to accept tougher spending cuts.

The White House parties the criticism by saying the "trigger" is needed to meet the priority that Mr Clinton shares with the Republicans of reducing the budget deficit to zero by 2002, two years after he will have left office. He has already made great strides, the deficit having gone down from \$290 billion when he was first elected in 1992 to \$107 billion now.

Mr Clinton has rejected one idea to save \$1 trillion over 12 years. He will not propose trimming the annual cost of living increases received by 60 million Americans in social security pensions and other government benefits. Economists say the savings are possible if he accepts that the Government's consumer price index overstates inflation by 1 per cent a year.



After eight years of preparation work, Graham Hawkes pilots Deep Flight 1 in Monterey Bay while Eric Hobson, a colleague, hitches a ride

British inventor plumbs the depths on maiden trip

FROM GILES WHITTILL IN RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA

LOOKING like an overfed cruise missile, the brainchild of one of the world's leading ocean explorers sits in a workshop on the edge of San Francisco Bay, waiting to be spawned.

Deep Flight 1, built for \$1 million (£600,000) by British

expatriate Graham Hawkes, is the first "hydrobot" mini-submarine. After almost a decade of toil and tinkering, the nervous designer was strapped face-down into its Plexiglas nose cone for a maiden voyage in Monterey Bay that proved "harrowing" but triumphant.

"At first the water was murky and I had no idea

which way up I was," he said. "But when it cleared and I saw the bottom for the first time it was magic; the moment of truth after eight years."

The bespectacled Mr Hawkes is an unlikely pilot of a machine worthy of James Bond, but an ambitious one. In Deep Flight 2, which so far exists only on the drawing

board and will take \$7 million to achieve, he hopes to "fly" 11 miles down to the inky abyss of the Marianas Trench and to "blast along the mid-ocean ridge" that encircles the globe 10,000ft underwater. In the process he means to discover the two thirds of the planet mankind has never seen.

"A terrestrial explorer would probably have to tie his legs together and hop backwards to the North Pole to do anything new," Mr Hawkes said. "But under the surface of the ocean you have to go out of your way to see anything that's been seen before. Ninety-five per cent of life on Earth is aquatic and half of it is still unknown to science."

The Marianas in the western Pacific have been plumbied before, when Jacques Piccard and US Navy Lieutenant Don Walsh descended to 35,800ft (nearly two miles lower than Mt Everest) in their cumbersome steel bathyscaphe, the Trieste, in 1960.

The only competition for Mr Hawkes in his quest to return there by the end of the

century is a \$500 million attempt by Japan to develop a new generation of unmanned submarines.

This mild-mannered engineer from Tooting, south London, is convinced natural wonders and possibly a financial bonanza await the first real conqueror of the deep. Science tends to support him: huge gashes on surfacing sperm whales have satisfied experts that giant squid never seen by people grow up to 70ft long beyond the reach of sunlight. Mineral bounties may also litter the ocean floor. Submersibles attached to mother ships have already stumbled on nodules of pure manganese and thermal vents along the mid-ocean ridge.

Deep Flight 1, a cross between a deep-sea diving suit and a conventional submarine, can dive, climb, turn and roll thanks to fins and twin motors driven by the equivalent of 20 car batteries. Mr Hawkes believes that within three years he will be able to offer access to Earth's last frontier for a fraction of the cost of his Japanese rivals.

US drive to boycott sweatshop clothing

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

A COALITION of American federal agencies, religious and community groups is campaigning to prevent Americans from buying clothing made in the sweatshops of the Third World.

Consciousness has not been raised so much by the coalition, however, as by revelations involving Kathie Lee Gifford, one of the most popular queens of daytime television. In June, Ms Gifford, co-host of the *Regis and Kathie Lee Show*, admitted that a clothing line bearing her name had been manufactured by under-paid workers in the Third World. Within weeks she had become the fiercest advocate of human rights to prevent American consumers from buying such goods.

Flanked by Robert Reich, the Labour Secretary, a tearful Ms Gifford said shoppers needed assurances that a product had not been produced in an "abusive or exploitative" manner.

"We want to shine the light on the cockroaches, basically," she said. Last week the National Labour Committee, which exposed the Gifford story, targeted the Walt Disney Company.

The organisation claimed that Haitian workers employed by a subcontractor in the Caribbean were earning \$2 a day to assemble 101 *Dalmatians* sweatshirts and tracksuit bottoms that sold for almost \$16 in the United States. Disney says its Haitian workforce is paid up to 52 cents (31p) an hour, not the 33 cents suggested.



Ray: dying in coma after liver failure

Assassin to be 'kept alive' for legal plea

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE family of James Earl Ray will approve life support in an effort to keep the convicted assassin of Martin Luther King alive until a court hearing that they hope will help to clear his name.

Ray, 68, jailed for life for shooting the civil rights leader in 1968, remained near death in a coma yesterday with liver failure. His brother, Jerry, said he hoped to keep him alive for a court hearing in Memphis on February 20. "If James dies, he goes down in history as Martin Luther King's killer," he said. "If James dies, he goes down in history as the man who killed the whole Ray family look bad."

Ray's lawyer is asking the court to order ballistic tests on a rifle which was found covered with Ray's fingerprints after King's murder. Ray claims he was framed by a mysterious accomplice named "Raoul" and that the gun is not the true murder weapon.

Burglar stuck in chimney

New York A burglar who tried to make a Santa-style entrance into a Baltimore supermarket became stuck in the chimney (James Bone writes).

Dwayne Terry, 33, said he was hungry and decided to wriggle into the shop on Christmas morning in search of food. Police, summoned by an anonymous caller, found him lodged 2ft down the

chimney. He was freed by rescue workers and charged by police with attempted robbery.

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Morocco's future is firmly embedded in medieval past

FROM TUNIKI VARADARAJAN
IN MARRAKESH

THE medieval world still flourishes vividly in Morocco, in spite of the country's giant strides towards modernity, its aversion to old-fashioned Islam and its proximity to Europe.

This world is nowhere more alive than in Marrakesh, a mere two hours by plane from Madrid and only three-and-a-half hours from London. The city, home to nearly half a million people, exudes the essence of another age long consigned in Europe to history books and the recesses of the imagination.

The medieval nature of Marrakesh offers important political insights into Morocco, Europe's nearest neighbour in Africa and the Arab world, 90 per cent of whose exports are dependent on the European market.

The country's social stability is a strategic concern of the first order, and Europe's diplomats would do well to look beyond the well-groomed, francophone veneer of their counterparts in Rabat for insights into late 20th-century Morocco.

The souks of Marrakesh and, above all, the startling



A snake charmer in Marrakesh, which exudes the essence of an age long consigned in Europe to history books

open-air market square of the Djmaa El Fnaa, offer an X-ray portrait of Morocco that is, to the Western observer, disquieting and exhilarating.

The youth of the country — 70 per cent of the population is below 25 years of age — is apparent in the Djmaa El Fnaa. The square's name means "Assembly of the Dead", but never was a name more inappropriate. Thousands of young men mill about, goggle-eyed with curi-

osity, as they watch the noisy jumble of hawkers, musicians, acrobats, snake-charmers, fortune-tellers and touts go about their age-old business.

Blind troubadours, playing primitive bowed instruments from the desert, sing love songs of beautiful women in distant lands, as grateful passers-by press coins into their hands. If a country's spirit resides in its music, Morocco's has changed little for

centuries. Old Berber women, their mouths modestly covered, shuffle grubby Tarot cards for an awe-struck audience, mumbling predictions that draw gasps from time to time.

That well-worn Western cliché of the "Orient" (Morocco, let it not be forgotten, is further west than Italy and Greece) is present everywhere in the Djmaa El Fnaa's snake-charmers. Horned vipers, sand boas, kraits and cobras

are all plucked from baskets by fearless men, for whose cacophonous read-music they perform their sinuous dances. Young acrobats, some no older than six or seven, whirl alongside the snakes, obeying orders barked by their grey-haired masters.

Intriguingly, the square is dotted with vigorous religious debates, a phenomenon that once flourished in the West. Experts and moralists, dressed in the distinctive jellaba

(an ankle-length robe with sleeves and a neatly pointed hood), brandish their learning as if wielding verbal scimitars.

Ideas are expressed freely, and have even acquired a contemporary touch. One debate I witnessed had Israel as its subject. Was it contrary to Islam for Morocco to be at peace with the Jewish state? One wise man argued passionately that it was. His opponent disagreed, speaking of the role of peace and forgiveness in Islam. More than an hour elapsed before the debate was declared a draw. A large crowd had listened with rapt attention.

Medieval hucksters abound in Djmaa El Fnaa, selling a variety of goods, potions and sexual activities in a free-wheeling market. Such markets are important pillars of the Moroccan economy. Unemployment, at 40 per cent for those aged under 30, drives men to make their living in unorthodox ways.

This, perhaps, is the clearest manifestation of a medieval world. To survive, a man must live by his wits, by the deftness of his reflexes and by never trusting anyone. A short flight from Europe, there still exists a way of life that we once led.

Rabbis tell soldiers to keep grip on 'God's land'

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

A GROUP of radical rabbis yesterday called on Israeli soldiers to disobey orders to withdraw from Hebron even as Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, spoke of the troop pullout being imminent.

The rabbis said Hebron, on the West Bank, was part of the land given to the Jews by God. Calling themselves "The Rabbis Unite for the People of Israel and the Land of Israel", the group said it was forbidden under Jewish religious law to hand any part of this area over to the Palestinians. There were fears that this could place some religiously observant soldiers in the dilemma of having to choose between God and country.

Among the six signatories to the decree was Rabbi Eliezer Waldmann, who runs a religious school for youths serving in the army. The decree was originally issued last year and caused a public outcry.

In another development, a far right-wing group, the ultra-Orthodox "Habayd", published the contents of a letter sent to the group by Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, shortly before his election in May.

"A Government we will head will see to it that a Palestinian state is not created and that other parts of the land of Israel not be turned over to foreign sovereignty," Mr Netanyahu wrote two weeks before the May 29 elections.

Rabbi Shmuel Hefer, leader of the Habad movement based in New York, released the contents of the letter in an attempt to halt the troop

redeployment in Hebron, which is holy to Jews and Muslims alike. However, there seemed little chance that religious Jews would succeed in holding on to the whole of Hebron, burial place of the patriarch, Abraham, his wife Sarah and their sons.

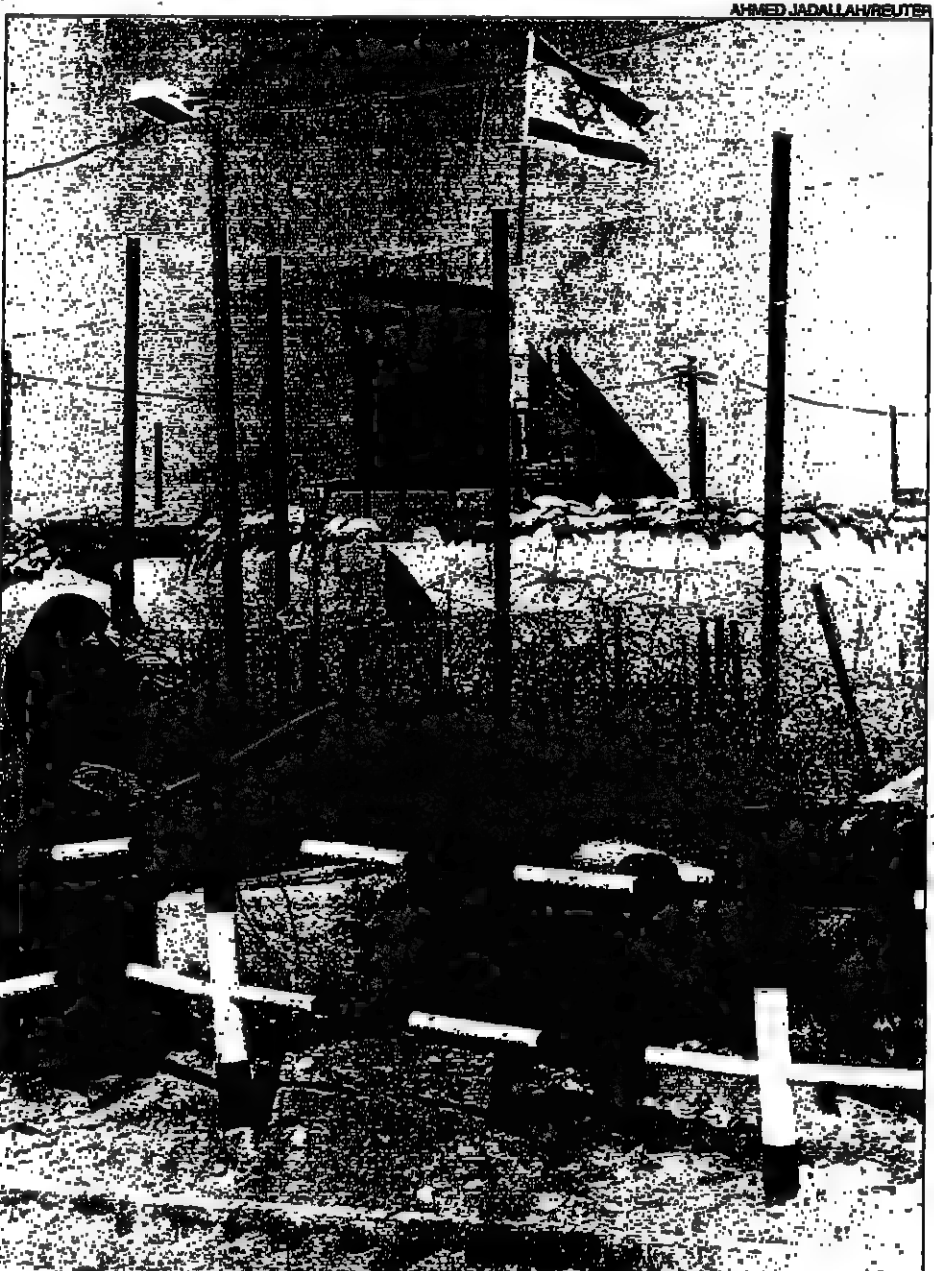
Mr Arafat told a closed meeting of the Palestinian Legislative Council yesterday: "An agreement on Hebron could be signed on the 30th or the 31st of the month. We hope 1997 will be a good new year for the region." Mr Arafat said that two of his security chiefs would see Mr Netanyahu today to discuss the proposed accord.

Martin Indyk, the United States Ambassador to Israel, was equally optimistic that an agreement would be signed next week. He replaced Dennis Ross, the American special envoy to the Middle East, who returned to Washington yesterday to brief President Clinton on the latest development in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

"Ross will return on Monday and hopefully we can reach the agreement soon after that," Mr Indyk said.

Palestinian and Israeli negotiators met again yesterday to resolve their final differences over Hebron — the last main West Bank town still under military occupation and complicated by the presence of 400 Jewish settlers who refuse to leave — and to discuss a timetable for the next stages in the peace process.

Edward Abington, the American consul-general, said Washington would add its



A Palestinian woman drives her goats past the Netzarim checkpoint yesterday

own "note for the record" to the Hebron agreement, spelling out the future obligations of both sides.

Palestinian officials are expecting the accord to include a commitment from Israel to release Arab prisoners, including 35 women inmates. In return, Israel is demanding that limits be placed on Palestinian police patrols near the Jewish neighbourhoods of Hebron. Israel also wants restrictions on the type of weapons Palestinian police can carry.

In the Gaza Strip, Jewish settlers were angry over Israel's reopening of a nearby main road to Palestinians. Until yesterday the road, which runs along the Mediterranean coast near the Jewish settlement of Netzarim, had been closed to Palestinian traffic since 1994.

In defiance of the Israeli military authorities, some Jewish residents from Netzarim staged a protest against the reopening of the road. Some settlers marked the

event by laying a foundation stone for a new Jewish neighbourhood.

End of the road: Israel's public transport company announced yesterday that it was ending its bus service to Egypt for lack of interest 18 years after the two states signed a peace agreement.

The Egged Corporation was losing £540 every time a bus made the 12-hour trip from Tel Aviv to Cairo with only about ten passengers, a company spokesman said. (Reuters)

Churches ablaze in Java riot

Jakarta: Indonesian troops moved into a town in western Java last night after a mob set fire to commercial buildings and churches, military officials said.

The 5,000-strong mob, many of them youths, was apparently incensed by reports that police had beaten a religious teacher and his two students. Residents said the town had suffered heavy damage, with department stores set on fire. Police said three churches were also set alight. (Reuters)

Malaysia storm toll rises to 106

Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia: The death toll in a tropical storm that hit eastern Malaysia on Christmas Day rose to 106 yesterday as rescuers began to identify bodies recovered from rivers and under debris. At least 100 people are missing. Police said about 3,000 people were left homeless after tropical storm Greg blew ashore in the state of Sabah. (Reuters)

Burma bombing blamed on rebels

Rangoon: The death toll from a bombing at a Burmese temple compound visited by senior officials rose to five as the military Government blamed rebel student and Karen groups. Soldiers stood guard outside the Kaba Aye compound yesterday, a day after two blasts injured 18 people and shook the man-made cave holding a Buddhist relic on loan from China. (AP)

Prison for w plane passenger

New York: An unruly passenger who became so troublesome that the pilot turned the plane round has been sentenced in America to four years in jail and fined the cost of the extra fuel (James Bone writes). Gary Lee Lougee, 40, refused a stewardess who attacked him alcohol because he seemed drunk already.

Cannibal tries to eat his cellmate

Moscow: A prisoner on death row for cannibalism was sentenced to death again by a court in Siberia for trying to eat another cellmate. Andrei Maslich, 24, sentenced to death last year, was awaiting a reply to his appeal for a presidential pardon. (AFP)

Car blast kills seven in Algiers

Algiers: Seven people were killed and 68 others injured when a car bomb went off in a working-class district of the Algerian capital yesterday.

It was the second such attack in a week, after a car bombing which killed three in the city centre on Monday, blamed on Islamic extremists at war with the military-backed secular regime.

Most of the victims in the Hussein Dey district yesterday were passers-by, young people and car drivers. Broken glass and tiles were strewn over a 100-yard area.

The explosion occurred not far from a paramilitary police post and a cultural centre. At least four cars caught fire and a bus was also hit. The cultural centre, inaugurated about a year ago, had a glass facade.

Security officials said 34 people were able to return to their homes after receiving medical attention.

The Armed Islamic Group has recently reimposed a reign of terror over the Casbah, the old quarter of the city, where armed men kill people, either by slitting their throats or shooting them with machine-guns, sometimes in daylight. (AFP)

600 held over attack on Saddam son

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

ABOUT 600 people, including senior security officials, have been arrested in Iraq after the assassination attempt two weeks ago on President Saddam Hussein's eldest son and heir apparent, Uday, the country's former chief of military intelligence, said yesterday.

His claim, regarded as plausible by Western and Arab diplomats, came as the state-run Iraqi media were ordered by the Government to glorify Uday, a reckless playboy and self-confessed killer, as a

"great survivor" and "hero of the people". Huge portraits of the lightly bearded Uday have also begun appearing beside those of his father in the exclusive al-Mansour district of Baghdad, where he was ambushed by gunmen in his car on December 12.

It is the first time since 1982 that the Iraqi leader has allowed anyone's picture other than his own to be draped in public places, and is seen as confirmation that Saddam is grooming the detested Uday for the succession.

General Wafiq Samarrat, Saddam's intelligence chief until he defected to Syria in 1994, said that among those arrested were three Olympic Committee officials who were also members of the ruling Baath Party and several religious figures. Uday is chairman of the country's Olympic Committee and football federation.

The head of Uday's office, Colonel Hussam Edin, was dismissed, and a former officer of the special guard, Hussein Abdallah, was

arrested and special guard officer Abdallah al-Duri was found dead, Mr Samarrat said.

A young woman travelling in Uday's black Porsche at the time of the attack has also been arrested, as well as a bodyguard who was cramped into the rear seat, a senior Iraqi source said yesterday.

"They suspect everyone, especially security people who knew his movements that night, but it does not seem they have got the culprits yet," he added.

Ex-nanny sues Netanyahus for unpaid overtime

FROM REUTER
IN JERUSALEM



Shaw: unable to find new job

THE Netanyahu family's disgruntled former nanny, dismissed last July after scorching soup, is suing the Israeli Prime Minister and his wife for more than £21,000 in back pay, her lawyer said yesterday.

The South African-born Tanya Shaw, 21, said in a petition to a Jerusalem labour court that Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sara, failed to pay extra wages for overtime and work on the Sabbath during her six months of employment, as required by law. "The overtime and Sabbath wages along with interest amount to

120,000 shekels (£21,500) to date," Moshe Zingel, for Ms Shaw, said.

He said the judge at the opening hearing yesterday ordered the Netanyahus to respond to the petition within 45 days. Mr Zingel said Mrs Netanyahu would probably have to take the witness stand. He said that Ms Shaw's name had been tarnished by the affair and as a result she had been unable to obtain another job.

Ms Shaw told reporters after her dismissal in July that Mrs Netanyahu was obsessed with cleanliness and had called her "a murderer". The scandal was on the front pages of tabloids for days, embarrassing Mr Netanyahu a month after his election.



Sara Netanyahu: taken to court

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Blast raises fears for 103 hostages in Lima embassy

AN EXPLOSION heightened tension near the besieged Japanese Ambassador's residence in Lima yesterday, where 103 people are still being held hostage. The latest to be released, last night, was said to be the Guatemalan Ambassador.

The Red Cross said the explosion, heard shortly before dawn yesterday, was caused by a mine laid by the Tupac Amaru rebels being detonated by an animal.

The fate of the hostages, now facing their tenth day in captivity, was no clearer, despite a flurry of mediating efforts over the past few days.

The Red Cross said its officials were talking to the rebels and continued to deliver food and medical supplies to the hostages, thought to be suffering from worsening hygienic conditions and low morale. Michael Minnig, who leads the Red Cross team and has been a key mediator, would say only that "negotiations were still under way".

On the afternoon of Christmas Day his efforts paid off, with the release of a top Japanese diplomat suffering from dehydration. The Japanese Embassy's First Secretary, Kenji Hirata, was brought out in a wheelchair and driven to hospital.

When rebels stormed the



Intense negotiations have won the release of only two more hostages, Gabriella Giamini reports from Lima

Japanese Ambassador's residence on the night of December 17, they had about 500 hostages at gunpoint. Within hours they released all the women and children. Over the past week they released 300 more people, including all Western diplomats whom they deemed as unimportant hostages.

They kept 105 people, mostly key Peruvian government officials and security chiefs — but two more have been freed in the past two days.

Still held is Morihisa Aoki, the Japanese Ambassador, and a number of Japanese businessmen who are important investors in Peru.

Mr Hirata's release also seemed to be the result of intervention from the Catholic Church. The Bishop of Ayacucho, Juan Luis Cipriani, became another player in the negotiations when he walked into the rebel-controlled building — and did not emerge until six hours later.

Monseñor Cipriani, a close friend of President Fujimori, is believed to have delivered a message from the President to the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement guerrillas holding the hostages.

Señor Fujimori has maintained throughout the hostage crisis that he will not strike a deal until the guerrillas lay down their arms and release all the hostages. Monseñor Cipriani is said to have spent hours talking to Nestor Cerpa Carotini, alias "Comandante Evaristo", the rebels' leader.

President Fujimori's eldest daughter and Peru's First Lady, Keiko Fujimori, also appeared at the doors of the building on Christmas Day as her father's envoy. She delivered roast turkeys, decorated with gold cherries, and called on the guerrillas to give up.

Her gesture undoubtedly brought some Christmas cheer to the hostages who put up signs on the windows saying: "Thank you, Happy Christmas."



Red Cross volunteers carry out Kenji Hirata, released on Christmas Day

Andean peasants 'are trained into suicide squads'

By GABRIELLA GIAMINI

PERU'S anti-terrorist police claim the Lima guerrillas are part of a "suicide squad" of youths from the central Andean foothills.

Investigations have shown that the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement, which had kept a low profile since the capture last year of its leader, Victor Polay Campos, has spent months planning its attack in hideouts near the Andean towns of Oxapampa and Chachapoyas.

"The terrorists inside the embassy building are mostly between 16 and 20 years old and are ready to die for the cause," said a high-ranking police officer, who would not give his name.

The rebels trained youths from poor rural communities in remote villages into "suicide squads" named "Comando Edgar Sánchez" — after a fallen comrade who strapped explosives to his body for a bomb attack on a bank five years ago.

The police said that they had harboured suspicions of a Tupac Amaru resurgence but had not expected the group to be capable of such a well-planned attack. "We had an idea that they were training men in the remote Andes but we did not take them seriously and never thought they could get this far," the source said.

the 1980s as a mainly urban guerrilla group raiding food factories, then taking their booty to shanty-towns surrounding cities. Now they have a new image. Their latest leader, Nestor Cerpa Carotini, who claims to be a Marxist and a follower of Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Latin American revolutionary, has rebuilt his ranks with cash accrued by kidnapping businessmen and providing protection for drug-traffickers.

There had been frequent reports in the past few months of Tupac Amaru activity in the remote northern jungle region along the Alto Huallaga river estuary — Peru's main cocaine-producing area.

The group's re-emergence could encourage a similar regrouping of the country's traditionally more ruthless guerrillas, Shining Path — the Maoist Sendero Luminoso. Fifty of its gunmen raided the village of Abra de Porculla, 60 miles north of Lima, on Wednesday, killing six peasants it accused of being government informers.

President Fujimori had vowed that he had "squashed" the guerrillas with the arrest of the Shining Path's founder and leader, Abimael Guzman in 1994, and then the capture of Señor Polay.

However, his optimism has proved to be premature.

Big studios miss out in line-up for Oscars race

By GILES WHITTELL

IT MUST be a miserable time for ushers. No fewer than ten new films have opened in America over the past 72 hours, including *Evita*, Kenneth Branagh's four-hour *Hamlet*, and *Michael*, a story about mild-mannered hacks bemused by John Travolta as a fully-feathered angel.

The buzzard of releases rounds off a year of commercial triumph and critical disaster for most of the big Hollywood studios, leaving an exceptional crop of high-quality "independent" films — many of them at least partly British — as hot favorites for Oscars in three months' time. The year will be remembered by accountants and action addicts as the year of space invaders and tornadoes. *Independence Day*, in which aliens destroy much of the planet including the White House, has taken a staggering \$733 million (£441 million) worldwide so far. With *Twister*, *Mission: Impossible*, *The Rock* and *Eraser*, it leads a quintet of blockbusters that between them have earned more than \$2 billion since the summer.

But this was also the year in which the major studios, according to this week's *Variety* magazine, "delivered perhaps the weakest line-up of Oscar prospects since the awards began in 1927".

Only four big-budget studio films are considered serious Academy Award contenders. *Evita*, which broke box-office records in London last weekend, should receive at least one nomination even though not all US critics enjoyed it. *Entertainment Weekly* called Alan Parker's long-awaited film one of the year's five worst — "a series of sluggishly dissociated production numbers" in which Madonna "erases her own charisma".

The People vs. Larry Flynt, on the theme of pornography, has been hailed for supporting roles by Courtney Love as a drug-addicted stripper and Edward Norton, who plays a lawyer for a magazine's crippled publisher.

Daniel Day-Lewis and his fellow Briton, the director



Harrelson: film theme is pornography

Nicholas Hytner, are being talked of as Oscar candidates for their work on *The Crucible*, and Sony Pictures hopes Tom Cruise may have graduated in voters' estimations from heart throb to serious actor in his latest role as a sports agent in *Jerry Maguire*.

Otherwise, the awards field is open to less expensive but more adventurous films made largely without Hollywood's help. Chief among these are *The English Patient* and *Shine*, a period piece and a true story of interrupted genius respectively.

The English Patient, nominated for seven Golden Globes, boasts vistas of Saharan dunes and Tuscan olive groves as well as Ralph Fiennes and Kristin Scott Thomas as doomed lovers in the chaos of war. "This, you realise with a gasp of joy, is what movies can do," wrote *Time* magazine's Richard Corliss.

Shine has been, if anything, more rapturously received. The Australian story of a pianist who suffers a nervous breakdown (despite kind guidance from a professor played by Sir John Gielgud) won the US National Board of Review's Best Film award and is regarded by many critics as perhaps too good for an Oscar.

The same goes for *Trainspotting*, the grimy hilarious homage to Scottish heroin addiction, and *Secrets and Lies*, Mike Leigh's un-wrapping of love and prejudice in working-class south London.



Madonna and Antonio Banderas in a scene from *Evita*



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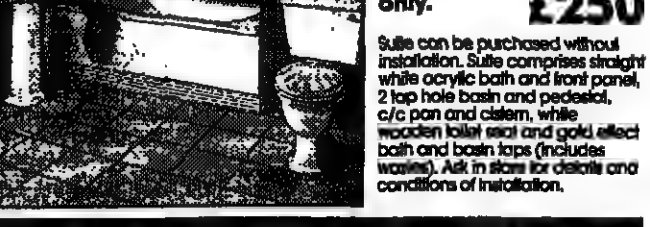
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New Year's Eve does not disappoint, it merely reinforces prejudices. It is always bad. Nobody can remember a good one.

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'There's an energy from love which carries on'

THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



Instead of Lady Bracknell, Lady Olivier has plumped for playing a Walt Disney nanny. And such roles are not to be scorned, she says

Miss Joan Plowright has reached the stage when she might be expected to give us her Lady Bracknell, or her Mrs Malaprop, both of which she has turned down in recent years. Instead, she is being Françoise Gilot's grandmother in *Surviving Picasso*, and the nanny in Disney's *101 Dalmatians*, playing midwife at the birth of Pongo's 15 puppies.

Such roles are not to be scorned: "When you get such interesting and amusing film roles, it doesn't seem dreadfully exciting," she says, "to be in the 25th revival of *The Rivals*. And it's fun setting off all over the world — and being extremely well paid." Her laughter is a rich deep brown, like her eyes.

Lady Olivier has blossomed onto the screen since her husband died in 1989, playing a series of characterful matriarchs — notably Mrs Fisher in *Enchanted April*, modelling her style on a suffragette great-aunt, which won her an Oscar nomination. She is Françoise Gilot's grandmother in *Surviving Picasso*, out soon. Has Hollywood claimed her? "No, my roots are here, my family is here, my terms of reference are here. But I enjoy finding out about film, having been very much a theatre animal."

As a child in Scunthorpe, she acted in plays put on by her mother, she was Elizabeth Bennett in the *Darby* of her brother David, later chairman of Granada. In her teens she won a drama cup, the prize being a week playing a maid with the Harry Hanson Players, "plumping cushions and dusting".

Seizing her opportunity at 15, she went up to London to see Hanson, in a coat with velvet collar and a velvet belt. The waiting room was lined with platinum blondes in furs,

smoking cigarettes out of silver cases. "Mr Hanson raised his eyebrows in disbelief as I came through the door. He sat at a desk, with overflowing ashtrays. I told him I'd won his cup, and said I wanted to act."

"He looked at me, kindly and avuncular, pointed to the wastebasket stuffed with letters and said: 'Go home, my dear, go home.' So I went home until I got my scholarship to the Old Vic Theatre School." When George Devine whisked her into the Royal Court, she starred in *The Country Wife* — and one night Olivier was in the audience.

"I was entranced," Olivier wrote in his *Confessions of an Actor*, "by the Margery Pinchwife of Miss Joan Plowright, whose very name was enough to make me think thoughts of love." He went back stage, with his wife Vivien Leigh, and had eyes for no one but Joan, "whose smile had more than a hint of mockery about it."

He thought he represented everything a northern lass would despise. "I was titled, self-satisfied, pompous, patronising..." But when she played his daughter in Osborne's *The Entertainer*, Olivier was smitten. "I realised Larry was falling in love with me when he called me Miss Wheelshare in rehearsal," she says. "He said it was equally agricultural." Wheelshare later became the name of their company.

"My daughter found my schoolgirl diary which said 'Got letter back from L.O.' She had written a fan letter to Olivier after seeing him as Heathcliff. Of course it would be a letter from his secretary, signed by him. But I didn't know that at the time."

Her own career took a back seat as she gave Olivier what he wanted: a family. And



Lady Olivier has blossomed onto the screen since her husband died in 1989, playing a series of characterful matriarchs

though he never quite managed to devote himself wholeheartedly to family life, Joan kept the home fires burning. "Doesn't every woman? Attitudes have not really changed. If a man is to achieve, someone has to step down for a bit, as long as each of you gets a turn. He was a world-famous figure, and I sensed the responsibility I had, in helping to keep his life going in an enormously important, highly stressful job. Larry didn't want us to be ships that passed in the night."

"When he was running the *National*, I was determined that we would not be 'actor-manager and wife'. I said I would not act with him for the first five years, and didn't, apart from Vanya, opposite Michael Redgrave. But eventually she was under contract to them for ten years, the *National* repertoire allowing her to be at home half the time."

In *Saturday, Sunday, Monday* she earned a Sweet award — now known as an Olivier, of course — cooking a spaghetti bolognese on stage every night. "I nearly turned that part down, but they said: 'You'll have to make up your mind, because tomorrow we're sending it to Rachel Roberts.' The thought that somebody else might do it suddenly made me realise what a good part it was."

The junior Oliviers, Richard, Tamsin and Julie-Kate, are now making their own waves — Richard is directing *Henry V*, the opening play at the new Globe next summer — "but I let them do their own publicity," she firmly says. While she was nursing her husband and turning down work, he "propelled" her into accepting her first American film role, in *I Love You To Death*, with Kevin Kline and Keanu Reeves. "My son Richard said he would move in while I was away, and get Larry to record Shakespeare's sonnets and scenes, for an audiobook company. We asked Ian McKellen and Maggie Smith to come down: Maggie

said: 'Ooh I don't know, I'm very dubious, he'll go on at me about my vowels.'"

That Hollywood excursion snowballed into five more films requiring a strong, matronly character. Miss Plowright's comfortable face and figure distinguish her from Hollywood stuntsome things who strive to look like Joan Collins. But she keeps fit in her swimming pool in Sussex, and at health farms after each film, since on location actors eat non-stop.

According to Goldie Hawn in *The First Wives Club*, there are only three roles for a female film star: "Babe, dis-

plained that the dogs don't talk. "But that's the whole point: the dogs talk their own language and get things done, while the talking humans are helpless."

"One day, if good sense should prevail, Joan will make a superb director of a theatre company," Larry wrote. She does have a directing project in mind — a television documentary. She also fancies doing a Road movie with Jeanne Moreau (they met on *Clothes in the Wardrobe*, by Alice Thomas Ellis). "We told a television interviewer that we would like to do an older version of *Thelma and Louise*," she roars with laughter.

Between film offers, she is jotting down random thoughts towards an autobiography. "When Larry was worried about where to start his book, he was told: 'Picasso said it doesn't matter where you start a portrait. You can start with the big toe.' When Gore Vidal wrote *Palimpsest*, he just let memories come to him as he sat in Ravello — as I did with him last summer."

Having married a husband 22 years older, she knew she might well end up on her own. "You take it into account, and talk about it so to an extent you are prepared. But you can't help it, if you have a great passion: it is better to have loved and lost... And there is an energy from that love, which carries on." Her husband once quoted "artists must be selfish, it is in fact their duty" from Shaw's *Man and Superman*, admitting that his way of life had demanded great forbearance from his family: "What my beloved Joan has had to stand from me, has since caused me much wonderment."

At Olivier's 1989 memorial service at Westminster Abbey, where Gielgud, Guinness, Finney, Maggie Smith etc performed — in some triplication, feeling that Olivier was listening — they could have filled the abbey five times over. This year Lady Olivier had her usual Christmas gathering at

Poets' Corner in the abbey. "Every year the grandchildren light the candles and we put flowers and holly around the stone, and sing one of Larry's favourite carols, *O Come All Ye Faithful*, to which we all used to sing different harmonies, which rarely matched."



Sir Laurence and Lady Olivier with Tamsin

Small, dry and so very cool

Sherry has become the party season's absolutely essential drink

One night last week I am chilling in the basement at the Globe, in the cold hours before morning, when all of a sudden I feel a sharp nudge in my lower ribs. I recognise this nudge as MNSing from the elbow of Easy Eddy McGyver, the heppiest hound on the London club scene.

"Yo, Easy!" I say, turning round and checking my image in his metal bug-wrap Oakleys.

"Word up," he says. "Fresh. What are you drinking?"

This is not so much a question, as a final eliminator in the do-you-get-to-drink-with-Easy knockout competition. And so I sweat a little. Ice Beer? I think not. He will take me for a skiing kangaroo. I don't dig a "fish" (iced tea and vodka) just now, and jelly shots are a relic of the March '95 Chechen-chic explosion — the crucial thing here is to get it right. Know what I'm saying?

And so I kick the board into his snow, like, and say: "No, Easy. You're the man, let me get one for you." It is risky, but at least I am wearing a Gotcha v-neck with asymmetrical orange and brown stripes. It should get me through this.

"A sherry, then," he draws. "Dry and cold, preferably Tio Pepe." And I pull up dead on the frozen wave.

But Eddy is right. I have done my research in the days since then and it turns out that the *only* thing to be seen drinking this winter is cold manzanilla, in a short-stemmed sherry flute.

For sherry has undergone a revolution in the eyes of the most hip, and is cutting-edge cool. Gone is the crumbly image encapsulated in Maggie Smith's line in *A Private Function*: "I'm going to throw caution to the winds and have a sweet sherry."

Forget forever, or at least until January, the brown juice of Oxford tutorials remembered so lovingly by John Betjeman: "Belkan Sobranies in a wooden box / The college arms upon the lid: Tokay / And Sherry in the cupboard..."

For pale sherry is back.

and sliding down every gullet under 30 that knows what is good for it.

At lunchtime in the City, young traders make for the nearest tapas joint, to stand at the bar in Nicole Fahri overcoats and shout "amor y pesetas!" as they swig their *fino*, and gobble *jamón* sliced from the haunch in front of them.

"It goes with anything," one yuppie explained to me at Meson Los Barilles, in Spitalfields. "Light food or heavy. You get drunk but you don't get bloated. That's why Spaniards have so much fun: they get utterly carred on this stuff at lunchtime, but don't crash out at their desks like the fat wine-soaked luses that used to run Britain, and who are being superseded by young thrusters like me, manzanillizing our way to the top. I'll probably do half a dozen glasses and then go back to work raring to go."

Alberio y Grana, in Sloane Avenue, is the place to drink sherry at night. "You can't help feeling a bit swank,"

clubkitten Ruth Sullivan told me. "It cleans your palate, like white wine, except that you don't have to finish the bottle when you're sick of it. Neat gin is over now, so near-frozen manzanilla is the tidiest thing to line your glass with."

You get those cool glasses," she went on, "and because it's stronger than wine it doesn't lead to the water retention that softens crucial bone definition in the hours before dancing. And it gives you a pep-up zing that, these days, is associated more with illegal chemicals than fortified wine. It is the absolute of the 1990s."

"The other cool thing is that you eat sliced *jamón* with a cocktail stick, so you feel like a little bullfighter. That's what it is. Sherry has that combination of macho and daintiness that bullfighting is all about — just like clubbing."

So when Granny offers you a sherry this new year, there is only one thing you can say: "Wicked, flygirl. Lay it on me."

SIGN OF THE TIMES

by Giles Coren

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Philip Howard



What book is less commonplace than a diary? A commonplace book

After the thank-you letters comes the change-over of diaries. This is the annual rite of passage that upsets even those of us who are cavalier with our daily records. The scribbles that we can still read, we can no longer understand. Engagements that a month ago were important enough to be underlined three times have quite gone. In the personal notes we are annually humiliated by having no fax numbers to enter and by having forgotten our National Insurance numbers. Names that were on the tip of the tongue in the summer have faded or become monstrously mismatched with others. Who was Ebenezer Biggs? And can this illegible scrawl be mine? And so the changing of diaries is distressing as a reminder that we are a year's march nearer to the door of the Alzheimer hotel.

So this year at the end of December I made calendar resolutions — as usual. As usual I know the resolutions will not be kept beyond January 1. In 1997, I undertake not to keep a desk diary at the office as well as an overlapping pocket diary in my right-hand trouser pocket. That way I'll remember double bookings and forgotten dates. Next year I will enter in the diary numbers that really matter, such as the Open Sesame number for the bank's hole in the wall, and the magic number to reverse the charges to the word-factory of *The Times*.

In 1997 I resolve to make the time to enter dates and names legibly, not in shorthand. No more will I make the excuse that a daily journalist has a work-span of a single day, and that tomorrow and all its tomorrows can look out for themselves. Next year, sufficient unto the day will no longer be the cock-up thereof in the efficient Howard diary.

But, of course, it ain't going to happen. Why should my 1997 diary be different from its long line of scruffy predecessors? It would be far more sensible for all of us in the scribbling business to keep an old-fashioned commonplace book. We are more interested in fine phrases and jokes than in conferences and appointments. We could preserve the fleeting *bon mot* or wise words as we heard them, at dinner or in speeches or on the radio. They would be a record of the passing annual chat show. And we could then recycle them in our copy.

Jock Murray, the last of the gentleman publishers, was the last person I know to keep a commonplace book. At dinners of the Literary Society he would pull out a little blue notebook from his inside jacket pocket and scribble in it in pencil. His jokes and jottings of more than 60 years have been published in time for diary-challenge day by his son and successor in their eponymous publishing house. When *Childe Harold* was published, Byron wrote to find himself famous. And his publisher, John Murray I, wrote to find himself a gentleman.

I can still hear his grandson chuckling and clicking his fingers and riddling his spectacles with delight when he heard some of these proverbs and gobbers for the first time. The Fleet Street report: "The girl was beheaded, chopped into pieces and placed in a trunk but was not interfered with." The notice seen in a butcher's shop in Westmoreland: "John Murray, seller of tripe." The sign saying: "Harwich for the Continent" — and underneath, "Frinton for the incontinent." The notice in a Southport hotel: "Baths may be had (by arrangement) with the manageress only." And at Christmas-cracker time, "What did the bra say to the top hat? You go on ahead while I give these two a lift."

But what is encouraging for us lesser keepers and wasters of words is that Jock himself was not as organised as he may sound. His pencil marks faded over the decade, and his writing sometimes became as illegible as ours. Only a fraction of his entries in more than 40 small notebooks have proved decipherable. And Jock was sometimes as careless as a journalist with his attributions. I think that the author of his witribution about sex at the age of 93 must have been George Burner rather than "George Burney", as published. But Jock is a new year model for us. Those of us who live by the word are defined by the words of our generation. We are impervious to let the best words whistle down the wind. So I resolve to keep a commonplace book next year. But just in case, I hope that someone else as companionable as Jock is still taking down the best bits.

The Prince of Wales's charities succeed because they encourage local self-reliance, says Frank Prochaska

With a little help from His Royal Highness

Does the Prince of Wales have a job, or is the sole purpose of his heir to the throne to wait upon events? Though trivial to republicans and humdrum to the press, Prince Charles's philanthropy is probably his best hope of clawing back public favour. Last year, the Prince of Wales raised more than £20 million for good causes. This is small beer compared to the social security budget, but more than four times his income from the Duchy of Cornwall. At present he is stepping up his work for the young unemployed, ethnic minorities, the homeless and the disabled through a host of institutions, but most of all through the Prince's Trust group of charities.

The Prince's Trust is a revealing royal institution. Since its foundation in 1976, it has provided grants, training or study support to more than 150,000 young people. The Prince's Youth Business Trust, now the biggest new business agency in the country outside government, has been instrumental in the creation of 30,000 companies and 60,000 jobs. (After three years, 60 per cent of the companies were still trading.) In his recent book *Investing with the Grand Masters*, James Morton argues that Prince Charles "has no peer when it comes to his investment record. There is not a venture capital trust around today which can top his results over the last ten years." Unlike other entrepreneurs, the prince receives no dividends for his services, but as royal charitable work is arguably one of the most compelling reasons for the monarchy's survival, there are other rewards to be reaped.

There is nothing new about a Prince of Wales assisting the young and the unemployed. Looking back on his years as Prince of Wales, the Duke of Windsor noted: "The job... was, first, to carry on associations with worthy causes outside politics and clothe them with the prestige of the Prince's high position; and, second, to bring the monarchy, in response to new conditions, ever nearer to the people." But when Edward VIII said, famously, "something must be done", he expected someone else to do it. Prince Charles is more assiduous than his great-uncle. He does not model himself on any past member of the Royal Family, but his outlook is strikingly similar to that of Prince Albert, who called on the rich and famous to support his various schemes of social improvement. Like Albert, Prince Charles assumes that a sense of place and good design are essential to human happiness, and that commerce and charity are essential motors of the drive for social betterment. The message that radiates from the Prince's Trust is that social problems are best remedied by personal service, local initiative and self-help. The social philosophy of the Prince of Wales may be described as deriving

from Edmund Burke by way of Prince Albert. At its heart is the view that people should administer themselves as much as possible through the family, parishes and local agencies. When Prince Charles uses the word "community" it means particular people in a specific place, not a collective abstraction. (It is instructive to compare his use of the word with Tony Blair's.) He is often charged with lacking a coherent programme, but an approach to social ills that is based on local communities is bound to seem muddled to those who seek the uniform, comprehensive solutions of the New Jerusalem. The lack of a strategic view is perhaps not so much a problem for Prince Charles as it is for the public, which has been led by successive post-war governments to assume that if it pays its taxes it can sit back and leave the removal of social inequalities to elected officials.

Constitutional monarchy operates in the context of representative democracy. But pronouncements by the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and the Prince of Wales suggest that they have a high regard for the participatory democracy that is immanent in voluntary institutions, a regard which flows from the

alliance that has developed between the monarchy and charitable bodies over the centuries. In 1990, Prince Charles spoke of the need for "volunteers" to encourage a sense of community and to defend the values of a democratic society. Royal experts have failed to notice it, but the Crown sees the volunteer and the intermediary institutions of civil society as a buffer between the individual and the State, and a safeguard against overbearing, bureaucratic government. Such assumptions underpin the Prince's Trust.

In this century, representative democracy has tended to push out the spontaneous, pluralistic democracy of voluntary bodies, with the result that citizens have become consumers of government rather than its producers. But few outside political circles now believe that social reform can be delivered by ministerial fiat. Given the decline in collectivist ideals, and recent moves by all political parties to encourage active citizenship, there are indications that the participatory democracy inherent in voluntary institutions is coming back into fashion. Though members of the Royal Family may not appreciate it, they are uniquely placed to

take advantage of this shift. With one foot in the State and the other in the charitable sector, Prince Charles is in a position to influence social policy. When he writes to a minister on behalf of one of his charities, the minister must take some notice.

The Prince of Wales prefers voluntary remedies to political ones, but he recognises the need to work with government. Although anxious to be politically neutral, the Prince's Trust has been inviting Members of Parliament to see its work in action in their constituencies. Sensitive to public relations, it has also staged big set-piece events, such as President Chirac's visit to Glasgow and President Mandela's to Britain. There is a danger, however, that politicians may see it as a think-tank with glamour and ideas that can be co-opted for ministerial use. Presumably, this would be anathema to the Prince of Wales, who would not wish to see his efforts leading to more government.

Prince Charles remains sceptical about the centralising tendency of government. There is a danger in the Government's current enthusiasm for contracting out services to voluntary bodies. Many a charity, desperate for government money, is swimming in the mouth of Leviathan. Prince Charles is anxious to keep his distance. But given the record of his charitable projects — and how many ministers have created 60,000 jobs? — Leviathan may soon be swimming after him.

Frank Prochaska is the author of *The Welfare Monarchy* (Yale).

Shakespeare in every home

You can never start too young with the greatest poetry, and once learnt, it is a treasure for the whole of life

Among my vast number of oddities, some of which have had bystanders seriously worrying, I include the practice of tearing paper. I am not quite so barmy as to sit about doing nothing but tear pieces of paper for hours on end, but when I am, say, clearing out a cupboard, and finding in it a bundle of papers which have no more use, I do get a mild pleasure from tearing the papers before I put them in sacks for the rubbish-men. This almost invariably means that very large numbers of papers, more or less vital to my life, have been accidentally scooped up with the useless ones, so that I spend the next month trying to remember what the precious papers, now lost for ever, were about. (Perhaps the worrying should go as far as men in white coats.)

But from time to time, I accidentally fish out a piece of paper which for the life of me I cannot place. One of these has just popped out, and I am intrigued to know how it got there, because it has plainly been mouldering in a cupboard for two or three years. Clearly, it is from *The Times*, but it has no byline and is headed just "By a staff reporter". (If the writer of the article is still on the staff and sees this, would he or she please let me know, so at last I can give some credit where it is due.)

But this little bit of sleuthing means, for me at least, a wonderful vista of glory, and I am not exaggerating when I say that. For the heading of the article is "Teach the Bard to five-year-olds", and the entire article is a beautiful plea to get the immortal lines of Shakespeare into heads so young that when they grow up they find Shakespeare in them for life. And to find that you have Shakespeare in you is second only to finding Heaven.

And I should know. For at my public school, one of the minor punishments for minor transgressions was to be given by the prefect or teacher a poem or a part of a poem and commit it to memory within a specified time, at the specified time, the transgressor had to repeat the poem, now bookless, and woe betide he who had not got the lines into his head in time. (You know about my magic carpet, the discovery that I had a memory so perfect that I could

recite two thousand lines of Shakespeare, or anything else for that matter, without any books. Alas, poor Yorick, the magic carpet burst into flames three or four years ago, and now I have to look up everything and anything I want to know.)

But let me alone, and let us contemplate what that eager chunk of newspaper could come to: "Teach the Bard to five-year-olds". First, let us tackle head-on the claim that if you stuff Shakespeare down a child's throat he will hate Shakespeare rather than love him when he grows up. The child who wants to run out and play rather than read Shakespeare is a real figure, but the same child, 20 years on, will bless the parent who demanded an evening a week of the boring Shakespeare.

In the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (and what a magnificent name!) Shakespeare must, of course, have a high place. And the RSA gives him one: "His output was prodigious, and his plays contain the whole range of human emotions, relationships, and situations. The themes are universal, encompassing every aspect of human endeavour. His language, rich in its imagery and dramatic power, moves fluently from heroic verse and lyricism to the broad humour of the street. His plays are read and performed in many languages and have been turned into ballets, operas, music scores, films and cartoons. Moreover, the acting of Shakespearean pieces by pupils is a means of exploring text and is a valid teaching approach. Seeing professional actors perform Shakespeare could also inspire curiosity and further study."

And that is how I came first to Shakespeare on the page, and from there on, Shakespeare on the stage. Many years ago — oh, all right: 49 years if you must — there was a music-hall less than 100 yards from my home. I had been reading Shakespeare voraciously for some years, but I had not seen any of it on a stage, though that was not strange, because I had never then seen any play. But Donald Wolff (yes, yes, you haven't the faintest notion of who Wolff was) brought his ragging and bobtail company to the Camden High Street music-hall.



Donald Wolff: the first incarnation of Shakespeare for the young Levin

I was, of course, dumbstruck. True, I was about 14 or 15 and as I say I had been reading Shakespeare for a considerable time. Nevertheless, the transition from the page to the human being is something I have never forgotten, and never will. In one of my own books — *Enthusiasms* — there is a substantial chapter entirely about Shakespeare, and as I have said, there was not a day when at least half a dozen pages weren't turned.

One of the most stirring moments of my life took place in the United

States, in Washington DC, where a very grand party was being given in the Folger Library — that mighty collection of everything in the world about Shakespeare. I had been asked to organise something for the evening, and I brought over two of Britain's finest players. I wrote a massive Shakespearean trumpet, made up of some of the hundreds of phrases that we use casually which originally came from Shakespeare. Maggie Smith and Alec McCowen spoke the lines wonderfully, but my finest hour was the utter silence

as the two players rolled the words into the air and I realised that practically no one in that great hall had before realised that so many hundreds of phrases were from Shakespeare.

But come, turn the pages, and with no more ultimate purpose let me recall just a few words of the millions he wrote.

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge!
'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus;
Another thing to kill.

There is a world elsewhere.
Perdition catch my soul
But I do love thee and when I love thee
not,
Chaos is come again.

If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them: I would have my bond.

Good shepherd, tell this youth what 'tis to love.

I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

'Tis the dross of the world, when madmen lead the blind.

The last of all the Romans, fare thee well.

I should like to know how many homes have a copy of Shakespeare. I wish every home had at least one. I seem to have nine, not including the original seven-volume Nonesuch and the later four-volume edition, and I even have the Bowdler, which I find delightful when I get to the words he had to expunge, such as "What bastard doth not?" but even "his mother's milk". Bowdler must have had a fit when he came to

She lov'd not the savor of her nor of pluck
Yet a tailor might scratch her where'er she did itch.

I also have a concordance, but alas, I now have to use a magnifying glass.

Once upon a time, it is said, there was a Bible in every home. I shudder to think what the numbers must be now. And if the Bible has vanished, Shakespeare is going also. Ah, but that tiny newspaper cutting, years old, shows that Shakespeare can be digested by five-year-olds, which means that the Bard still lives, and still teaches.

But don't just tell me: tell Shakespeare. When the plects crowded the arenas for another new work of Shakespeare, few there were who could read or write. That didn't stop them, nor did the rain. How can we bring back that feeling, that longing, that belief that every day has some Shakespeare in it? There can be only one answer: start with the children.

I was lucky: I met Shakespeare early. But now children do not need to be lucky, for that mysterious but wonderful piece of paper has demonstrated that even to the youngest, Shakespeare can be not only not boring at all, but a glory and shining path for ever.

Bad Ordre

TACT WAS clearly taking a breather the other day when Sir Anthony Hopkins received one of France's highest cultural honours. He still had the green and white ribbon and eight-pointed star of the Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres round his neck when he told French journalists that he was turning down a leading



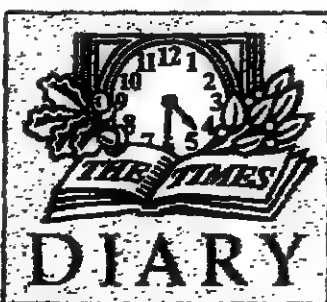
"I'm charging you with wearing a dangerous sweater"

role in the film version of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, one of the country's literary crown jewels, for the most flippant of reasons.

Hopkins had just been made a Commandeur along with James Ivory and Ismail Merchant, director and producer of his latest film, *Surviving Picasso*. Commandeurs are a serious bunch, and include the likes of Sean Connery. They are not to be confused with the Chevaliers des Arts et des Lettres, such as Sharon Stone and Sylvester Stallone, who are appointed by the French Ministry of Culture as casually as if they were municipal dog-catchers.

To the obvious dismay of the French press, however, Hopkins decided the presentation of the award was a good moment to explain why he was spurning the honour of playing Javert the policeman, who chases the escaped convict in Hugo's book. "It's too unrelenting a character," said Hopkins. "I'm doing Diego in *The Mask of Zorro* instead. Much more fun."

Animal rights activists are doing their best to make life a misery for fur-friendly Anna Wintour, the



British editor of American Vogue.

Earlier this month, a group jumped naked into a bath of fake blood right outside her offices. Worse was to come. The other day, during a lunch in the swish Four Seasons Hotel in New York, when over her shoulder and onto her plate flew a dead racoon.

Good Knight

PITY Ronnie Knight, in jail for seven years for his part in the £6 million Security Express robbery in 1983. A former husband of Barbara Windsor, Knight has written to *Private Eye* complaining about a cartoon. Imagine it being read out in the voice of Groucho in *Partridge*.

He is baffled by the "association of my name with a character holding a firearm and wearing what ap-

pears to be a stocking over his head". It's an injustice, he says. "To the best of my recollection I have never sported such apparel, nor, indeed, have I ever owned or possessed, still less used, a firearm of the type displayed or of any description." He asks the editor to "end the altogether more desirable attributes of Yours faithfully, R. Knight, HMP Blundeston, Suffolk."

Well, as for his virtues, Knight, whose years on the Costa del Crime have given him the complexion of a goatskin wallet, was convicted merely of receiving purloined



Knight unappreciated

goods in the Security Express case. As for the years he spent swanning around Spain evading arrest, he would never be seen in anything less than the very finest soft leathers.

Christmas pudding sandwiches are the latest horror to appear in InterCity's buffet cars. On trains up to Scotland, the sandwiches — a slice of plum pudding between two slices of bread — are presented alongside the more mundane ham, cheese and tuna. The official line for staff on the train, who are as disgusted as the travellers by the new snack, is that the Christmas pudding sandwich is in the same fine Scottish tradition as the deep-fried Mars bar.

Dirty work

LARGE GIN AND ITS will be in order around Buckingham Palace in February, as a new biography of Princess Margaret scuttles out.

It is the work of Theo Aronson, the noted author of *Prince Eddy* and the Victorian *Homosexual Underworld*. The publisher is Michael O'Mara, who published Andrew Morton's books about Diana, Princess of Wales, and Alan Starker's recent howl about Sarah Ferguson.



Princess Margaret: next for the treatment

Some idea of Aronson's take on Princess Margaret can be gauged from the newly issued press notice: "Everything — the lavish hats, the long cigarette holder, the drawing voice, the brightly lipstick mouth, the artfully dyed hair, the frequently replenished whisky glass, the high heels — reinforces the image of a raffish divorcee."

Through a family that has often been accused of being too county and conventional, she has swept like a breath of, if not exactly fresh, then certainly scented air. The Duke of Edinburgh is already facing up for a long, reflective walk.

P.H.S



ENDGAME IN BELGRADE

Milosevic has made one miscalculation too many

One of the most familiar rules of politics is that when leaders long accustomed to power make a mistake, they tend not to realise it until the error has become irreparable. The rule applies with particular force in police states where the warning lights that operate in democracies have been deliberately dimmed or extinguished. By sending in his riot police against the thousands of demonstrators who, for 38 days on end, have crowded the freezing streets of Belgrade with their peaceful, tenacious and courageous protests, Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic has reached the point of political rupture.

Until this bitter winter, President Milosevic had shown an uncanny ability to avoid being called to account for mistakes that, in his nine-year rule, have ruined his country. He failed in his bloody campaign for Greater Serbia and, in Serbia itself, presided over an economic collapse brought about by UN sanctions, hyperinflation and political corruption and mismanagement. Yet his party still won Serbia's legislative elections in November. He clearly expected to ride out with ease the street protests that followed his decision to annul opposition victories in municipal elections, which in terms of power were a comparatively minor matter. But that arrogant assumption of invulnerability was one mistake too many.

Under warning from the United States, the one country which he takes seriously, that severe sanctions would result if force were used, Mr Milosevic first tried the tricks that have served him before. They have not worked so well this time. He nobbled the courts, to whom the opposition had appealed to reinstate their election victories; but in Nis, Serbia's second city, the court defied him. He censored the media, particularly any broadcasts reaching outside Belgrade. But word has gradually spread.

This week, the man who could draw crowds of a million back in 1989 tried a direct appeal. His Socialist Party boasted that it could muster half a million to a counter-rally addressed by Mr Milosevic in Belgrade and

sent out the buses to bring them in. It was a fiasco. Humiliatingly, a mere 50,000 came. Having been told that the protests involved only a tiny handful of malcontents manipulated by foreign powers, they must have been astonished to encounter 250,000 protesters. Nearly 60 people were injured, one fatally, in the clashes which, orchestrated by Milosevic henchmen and police, ensued. Mr Milosevic has used the violence, the first in nearly six weeks of markedly peaceful and even witty popular defiance of the regime, as a pretext for deploying the riot police.

European governments have joined the US in insisting that the use of force will bring renewed international isolation on Serbia. If Mr Milosevic is sure of staying in power, isolation is a price that he would be prepared to pay; it is his people, not he, that would suffer. But this time, he cannot be certain that force will yield the desired result. Students and the disinherited middle classes form the backbone of the demonstrations; but he cannot assume any more that he has the support of the workers. At the top, moreover, cracks are appearing both in the political and the military establishments.

Western governments have given far less support to Serb demands for democracy and the rule of law than they did to similar movements in Warsaw or Prague in the 1980s. If this is because they have put "stability" before principle, they should recognise that a democratic transfer of power offers the only route back to stability. Mr Milosevic's unexpected invitation to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe to report on the municipal election results could provide a safety valve. The report, due this week, is expected to find for the opposition and must be given resolute international backing. If he yields, Mr Milosevic's grip on power will never be the same. But he knows that the alternative, the forcible repression of mass dissent, is at least as risky. The system is imploding; the West can and must help to make this a democratic, not a bloody, transition.

SCOTS WHA HAE

Seven hundred years ago: Wallace began work for new Labour

Seven centuries after the banner of revolt was raised and Scottish independence secured, the Lion of the North may be rampant again. In 1297 Sir William Wallace drove the English out of Scotland with brave heart and broad sword. In 1997 the memory of that struggle, lent romance by Hollywood's recent retelling of it, may help contemporary fighters for increased autonomy. The area of greatest division at the coming general election will be the constitution, not least Labour's plans to devolve power from Westminster to Edinburgh. In the year ahead the shade of Wallace, along with the spirit of many other Scots past, will be conscripted in a new battle for Britain.

Wallace's reputation stands almost as high as the monument to him which towers over Stirling, scene of his famous victory over the Earl of Surrey in September of 1297. Braveheart played fast and loose with the facts and was perhaps as much an exercise in taking liberties as celebrating them but the film's immense popularity in Scotland reveals an important truth about the stateless nation.

Popular consciousness of Scotland's distinctiveness appears to be at a higher pitch than at almost any time this century. Scots are expressing their identity with new confidence. The fund managers in full-throated roar at Murrayfield singing *Flower of Scotland*, the cinema audiences cheering the slaughter of the Sassenachs in *Braveheart*, and the young who find in the work of A. L. Kennedy, Irvine Welsh and Alan Warner that their lives have become literature, are all anxious to proclaim

Scottishness as their primary identity. The loyalties that bound Scots to Britain, the regimental, the royal and the political, have all been strained. But that is no reason, automatically, to make the leap that the Opposition makes and conclude that the new Scotland needs a new parliament.

Scotland's distinctiveness was guaranteed, indeed underpinned, by the Union. Independent, Scotland was a diminished kingdom with few kings capable of assuring its stability. Secured in the Union it enjoyed its finest hours. The institutions which defined Scotland, the law, Church and education, were all preserved distinct. Indeed, as sociologists such as Lindsay Paterson have pointed out, there has been a growth since the war in bodies which exist to nurture Scotland's specialness, from the original Highlands and Islands Development Board to the Scottish Arts Council.

A parliament to exercise some form of oversight upon all these bodies might seem appropriate but the Scots have not, historically, considered a parliament as central to their identity as the vitality of other civic institutions. The battles between Crown and Commons in 17th century England which gave Parliament its place as the guardian of liberties did not consume Scotland in the same way. Seen from Westminster, a separate parliament might be considered a prerequisite for nationhood, and in the changing circumstances of the late 20th century an assembly within the Union might be an appropriate answer to Scottish aspirations, but the history of Scotland shows that brave hearts and bold minds do not need new buildings to flourish.

MONSTERS OF ROCK

Pop's dinosaurs have been rendered extinct

A dramatic alteration in the weather spelt the end for the dinosaurs millions of years ago, now another climate change has seen off a second generation of slow-to-adapt small-brained beasts. Pop's dinosaurs, the creatures who dominated the last decade, have been overtaken by evolution and are ill-equipped to cope with the demands of a new mood. The taste for quirky lyrics, playground catchiness and laddish attitude which made Britpop the phenomenon of the mid-Nineties has seen a new generation of stars emerge and, even more dramatically, another set not so much fade, as implode. As David Sinclair reports on Page 32, Phil Collins, Sting and R. E. M. may feel that they still have several great records in them but the public are content to leave them there. The pop paternalists may inspire pity but they do not deserve sympathy. As The Rolling Stones realised, rock fans should reserve that for the Devil, not the dinosaurs.

The band most possessed by demonic energy this year, even to the point of self-destructiveness, has been Oasis. The Gallagher brothers have proved themselves bigger than Britpop in the same way as the Beatles easily transcended any Mersey beat. Part of their appeal has depended on the quality of their music, but a great deal of it has been character. They accurately reflect the hedonistic male working-class culture of

the Nineties. More than that, however, they communicate, even to those over 30, something of the danger integral to pop in a manner which Phil Collins — the sound of Club Class — now never can.

The bands which were bracketed with Oasis to form the Britpop pack have scarcely come near the Manchester group's popularity. But the effect of the whole on the nation's taste has been greater than that of the sum of the parts on the charts. The rescuing of pop from the midatlantic accent it was assuming tallied with a broader recovery of confidence in distinctive British taste. Pop music is usually the most ephemeral, not influential, part of popular culture but as Punk fore-shadowed a new individualism, so Britpop has signalled that culture is coming home.

The clearest proof that current fashions in pop may suggest a new confidence in Britain comes from the band of the moment. The Spice Girls, by making Baroness Thatcher their heroine and rejecting a single currency, reflect a new rebelliousness. The Inter-rail generation, having seen Europe, value it and the freedom to travel but seem to cherish diversity and the idiosyncratic charm of home all the more. If the Spice Girls do reflect the values of their generation, then it will not be long before other dinosaurs, the fudgers and federalists, find that a change in the climate has made them extinct too.

Duties imposed by limited liability

From Mr Piers Ashworth, QC

Sir, Those who oppose any erosion of the right to silence regularly cite two arguments — that the privilege against self-incrimination is enshrined in our common law and that the right to silence is a protection for the illiterate and inadequate. It is far from evident that either argument has any relevance to limited liability companies and their directors.

A limited liability company is an artificial creature unknown to common law. It was invented to enable merchants to engage in commercial ventures without risking their own money. Thus it can be of great benefit to those who would like to do business but who are afraid to do so on their own. It can be a powerful vehicle for fraud.

Accordingly Parliament has permitted the creation of limited liability companies only under strict rules to ensure the probity of directors and to protect innocent members of the public who may be persuaded to invest in or to trade with them.

No one wishing to engage in business is compelled to do so under the umbrella of a limited liability company. He can set up in his own name and trade with his own money, risking all his assets; indeed most professionals are (rightly) compelled to do so.

If a person wishes to shelter behind the artificial concept of limited liability, where is the unfairness in requiring him to observe the rules? There are many who would say — with justice — that those who wish to enjoy the enormous advantages of limited liability should be prepared to accept its disadvantages, including the loss of the common law privilege against self-incrimination.

There is no reason in logic why a person should be entitled to the same "human rights" when he chooses to trade in the guise of an artificial body.

Yours faithfully,
PIERS ASHWORTH,
2 Harcourt Buildings, Temple, EC4A 3DF

The changing Church

From Bishop Philip Goodrich

Sir, I would take issue with Ruth Gledhill on only one phrase in her otherwise welcome report. "Carey warns of growing pains" (December 16).

Archbishops and bishops have not been "managing decline" in recent decades. They have been managing change, which every other institution in the land has been doing or ought to have been doing.

It is a positive and forward-looking thing to do and may sometimes involve closing or adapting a church to the glory of God. It is also painful, because the Church too has its back-benchers.

It would be a help if religious affairs correspondents — Ruth Gledhill is an exception — were to cross the thresholds of the churches about which they write.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP GOODRICH,
Oxley Farm, Common Road,
Sutton St Nicholas,
Hereford and Worcester,
December 19.

Last trump

From Ms Sarah Miller

Sir, Walking through Hyde Park recently I was struck by the thought of how inappropriate it is for us, now on the cusp of a new millennium, to continue to give honour to the vast and fusty statues of former military and naval heroes. We do seem to hang on to artefacts as well as attitudes which have long outgrown their usefulness. With the European unity issue to the fore, it is surely time to send a new and much-needed message to future generations.

I would like to propose a plan to break up these old gentlemen on their horses and clear the streets of our major towns and cities.

But let us then put them to further good use and pack their ground-down remains off to garden centres or the building trade that they may be given fresh life by providing foundations for a better and more useful future for this country.

Perhaps a selective "cull" of stone and marble politicians could take place at the same time.

Yours faithfully,
SARAH MILLER,
66 Sevington Road, Hendon, NW4 4JH

Countryside clutter

From Lord Gibson

Sir, No one would wish to prevent "tourist attractions whose survival depends upon their whereabouts being known" putting up little brown directional signs (letter, December 19). But is it necessary to have a remote country road brown-labelled as a "leisure driver", as I found recently in north Oxfordshire? Does that not signal suburbanisation?

The Council for the Protection of Rural England's warning that the rising tide of clutter could ruin the countryside was much needed.

Yours faithfully,
GIBSON,
House of Lords.

Party unity and policy on Europe

From Sir Julian Critchley,
MP for Aldershot (Conservative)

Sir, For the first time in three years there are signs that the Conservative Government will enter the new year with a real chance of being returned at a spring election. In large part this is due to the Chancellor, the success of his policies and the robust way in which he has dealt with the Euro-sceptic wing of the Tory party. In a series of performances, both in and out of Parliament, he has routed his enemies.

There is a whiff of Vichy defeatism about the Redwoods, Cashes and Lamonts: they give the impression of preferring defeat to victory, being not so much interested in the return of John Major as in who should lead the rump of the party in Opposition.

Their Europhobia could still match defeat from the jaws of victory. Would not a period of silence on their part be welcome?

Yours etc,
JULIAN CRITCHLEY,
House of Commons,
December 24.

From Mr Mark Holland

Sir, Mr Brian Haines (letter, December 16) asks a good question. Perhaps he could say who I should vote for if I don't want a federal Europe and I don't believe in a single currency? Certainly not the Referendum Party, which is spending a lot of money in order to tell people what is already abundantly clear, namely that a majority of the population don't want either, without proposing to do anything about it.

The Conservative backbencher Edward Leigh complained the other day (report, December 6) that democracy in the Tory party is being frustrated. The truth is that democracy is being frustrated throughout the country if the main political parties are more concerned with "unity" in order to get re-elected than with implementing the wishes of the majority of the electorate on the single most important constitutional issue to be raised this century.

Yours faithfully,
MARK HOLLAND,
Blake Hall, Common Road,
Kensworth, Dunstable, Bedfordshire,
December 16.

From Lord Hardinge of Penshurst

Sir, If the House of Commons succeeds in handing over our sovereignty and independence to a bunch of European politicians it will indeed be time

Priority patients

From the President of the
Hospital Consultants and
Specialists Association

Sir, Whilst lip service is commonly paid to the principle that NHS hospitals should prioritise patients for admission according to their clinical need, the system now works against this commonsense approach.

NHS trusts incur penalties if routine admissions for non-urgent surgery are cancelled or postponed: income is lost and fines of up to £5,000 per case may be liable.

The Patient's Charter and league tables are also mainly about performance with routine outpatients and inpatient admissions, and trusts can suffer financially and in star rating if there is serious interference with the programme of waiting-list clearance.

Pioneering surgery

From Dr F. F. Cartwright

Sir, I am a little surprised that the distinguished anaesthetist Professor T. E. J. Healy, when recording the 150th anniversary of the administration of ether at a London hospital on December 21, 1846 (letter, December 19) should have mentioned the name of the surgeon, Robert Liston, but omitted the name of the most important man present, the anaesthetist. He was a chemist named Peter John Squibb. Perhaps we should also honour the subject of the amputation, Frederick Churchill, a 36-year-old butcher. The name of his second patient, from whom Liston removed an ingrowing toenail, is not known.

Yours faithfully,
F. F. CARTWRIGHT (author,
The English Pioneers of Anaesthesia,
John Wright of Bristol, 1952),
Flat 31, Swallowfield Park,
Reading, Berkshire,
December 19.

Rights in Kenya

From the High Commissioner
for Kenya

Sir, If Kenyans have lost confidence in their legal system, as is claimed by the so-called African Rights organisation (report, December 13), why do members of the opposition parties continually seek settlement of their disputes through the courts?

As with any police force in the world, there may be some bad apples; but the Government of Kenya is certainly not in the business of mistreating its people — a view held by the British High Commissioner (as quoted in the African Rights report) and substantiated by an EU fact-finding mission last September.

If African Rights genuinely wished to be constructive, it would have sought verification of the alleged

for us to consider our constitution and the role of the House of Lords.

The Commons, it has been said, would never allow any power to be taken from them, so it would be impossible to plan a second chamber which would require more power than the present House of Lords can wield. However, it is now clear that the Commons simply can't wait to surrender as much power as possible as fast as possible to the EU. This, of course, without consulting the people or even letting them know what was going on until it became a *fait accompli*.

I have a suggestion to make — simple, logical and very, very cheap.

Having abolished their ancient inheritance the Commons could get on and abolish themselves. They could vest what's left of their powers in the existing House of Lords, who would handle these residual responsibilities easily enough and with their usual good sense, sobriety, care and good manners.

Yours etc,
HARDINGE OF PENSURST,
Bracken Hill,
10 Penland Road,
Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex,
December 23.

From Mr Nigel Axelrad

Sir, The famous opt-out gained at Maastricht was to insulate us from the single currency if we decided not to join. It is generally accepted that the poorer and less productive areas of Europe will need increased contribution from the Social Cohesion Fund when unemployment rises as an inevitable result of the loss of exchange rate flexibility.

As a net contributor to the EU budget this must mean either that our contributions will have to increase or other funds we receive from the EU will be decreased if the existing "social cohesion". How does our opt-out protect us?

I note that Mr Major suggested that the space for the national symbol on the proposed euro banknotes was not large enough (report, December 14). This will not matter because once these notes are in circulation, intra-EU trading and travel will soon mix up the notes of varying origins. Hence the national symbol will fade into insignificance and will no doubt disappear on the next issue of notes.

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL AXELRAD,
Bank Farm,
Carlton, Nuneaton, Warwickshire.

The motivation to give routine hospital admissions a higher priority than their clinical need predates it therefore strong.

Since it is not uncommon for an emergency or cancer case to be admitted to hospital at a time when the operating theatres are fully booked with routine cases, emergencies tend to be slotted in at the end of the day, or even the night — not the best time for tired staff to be attending to the seriously ill.

This must be wrong. We must aim for a system which does not work to the disadvantage of those who need prompt attention.

Yours sincerely,
ROBIN LOVEDAY, President,
Hospital Consultants and
Specialists Association,
Number One, Kingsclere Road,
Overton, Basingstoke, Hampshire,
December 24.

Taxing the rich

From Mr Michael J. Brewer

Sir, Why is there such a mystery about how Labour will raise more tax revenues even if they keep income tax rates capped at 40 per cent?

I suspect they will introduce a wealth tax. At least eight EU countries already have one. I believe that when in power during the Seventies Labour published a Green Paper suggesting a wealth tax rate of up to 4 per cent per annum on capital assets.

Having read recently that there are now an estimated 100,000 millionaires in Britain, 20,000 having £10 million or more, the tax would produce a few billion pounds — and think how very popular such a tax would be with the voters.

Yours faithfully,
M. J. BREWER,
Oak Lodge,
The Commons,
Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire,
December 23.

abuses from the Kenya Government before publication of the report. So far as I am aware, no approach was made.

Your correspondent also states that the West agreed "earlier this year" to release funds for balance of payments support, which had been "frozen since 1990 in the attempt to force President Moi down the road to multiparty democracy". In fact the donors agreed to restore aid flows to Kenya at their meeting in Paris in November, 1993.

Yours sincerely,
MWANYENGELA NGALI,
Kenya High Commission,
45 Portland Place, W1,
December 16.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed in 0171-762-3046.

Heritage funding for historic ships

From Mr Angus Macdonald

Sir, The launch of a new national register of historic ships (report, December 4) is good news for our maritime heritage; but a sister proposal — the development of a fair system for comparing the historical merit of the ships on the register — is of even greater importance. It is a question those who allocate heritage funding have been asking maritime historians with some urgency: with only limited funds available, exactly which ships deserve to be preserved, and why?

Finding a system which can fairly assess the historical significance of an Elizabethan galleon compared to a second World War submarine, or an Edwardian racing yacht, or a 19th-century Scottish workboat is not easy, but the National Historic Ships Committee has had a go.

The committee has proposed a points system which evaluates individual ships according to criteria such as their age, condition, degree of original fabric and scarcity as a type, as well as less obvious criteria such as their historical associations with people and events, technological significance and aesthetic appeal.

It is an exciting and well thought-out proposal, which is probably as objective as it can be in such an emotive area and one which seems to have received general approval amongst maritime heritage groups so far. If it is adopted, it will make for a much more rational distribution of the relevant resources.

Sincerely,
ANGUS MACDONALD
(Deputy Editor,
Classic Boat,
Boating Publications Ltd,
Link House,
Dingwall Avenue, Croydon, Surrey,
December 23.

Thames bridges

From Mrs Judith Diamond

Sir, I concur fully with Sir Jonathan Mance's comments (letter, December 18) about the competition to design a bridge between Temple Gardens and London Weekend Television.

The exhibition at the Royal Academy presented the seven designs as initially submitted, and two of the seven in modified and revised form, making the voting very confusing.

There was, as Sir Jonathan said, no opportunity to vote on whether there should be a bridge on that site at all, and even if that were not at issue, no opportunity to reject all seven choices. I intend to notify the Academy that my vote for the best of a bad bunch is not to be taken as approval.

Yours faithfully,
J. DIAMOND,
Flat 2, 80 Fitzjohn's Avenue, NW3,
December 18.

From Admiral Sir Desmond Cassidi

Sir, Your correspondents have concentrated on the competition to design and build an "inhabited" Thames bridge, but have only touched on the environmental impact.

I have the good fortune to live near the Thames in central London and have often enjoyed the vistas to the east or west when crossing the existing bridges or walking along the pedestrian footway on the southern bank between Hungerford and Blackfriars Bridges. The light changes depending on the weather or time of day, giving stunning views of fine buildings, sky-lines and cloud formations.

Why do we allow the superb feature at the centre of our capital city that is the River Thames to be desecrated by a millennium Ferris wheel on the South Bank (letters, October 28, November 4), a "habitable" bridge, or indeed a new footbridge? If more crossings are needed could not the tunnelers get to work?

Yours faithfully,
DESMOND CASSIDI,
24 Rouppel Street, SE1,
December 23.

Lack of direction

From Mr Peter Caher

Sir, It seems that it is not only A levels that are getting easier. I notice in the December issue of *Director* magazine that an advertisement for the company direction programme run by the Institute of Directors informs readers that "A Certificate of Completion will be awarded to those who do not complete the accreditation process".

Presumably those who do not take part in the course are entitled to a Certificate of Participation.

Yours faithfully,
PETER CAHER,
Star Cottage,
10 Wicken Road, Newport, Essex,
December 23.

The words of princes

From Professor Emeritus
M. Hamerton

Sir, Is it not very strange that Prince Philip has to apologise for being sensible (letters, December 23), whilst Prince Charles does not have to apologise for being silly (letters, December 21)?

Yours faithfully,
M. HAMERTON,
42 Honister Avenue,
Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne,
December 24.

OBITUARIES

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL SAMUEL DERRY

Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Derry, DSO, MC, organiser of wartime escapes from Italy by Allied servicemen, died at Newark, Nottinghamshire, on December 3 aged 82. He was born on April 10, 1914.

Through his initiative, courage and brilliance as an organiser, Sam Derry ensured the passage to freedom of several thousands of British and American soldiers who were stranded in the Italian countryside after escaping from German captivity in the confused conditions reigning in the country during the Second World War. Operated from within the Vatican itself, thanks to the help of a friendly Irish priest, his Rome escape line became famous even within its relatively short life, defying German efforts to locate its source and destroy its organisation.

His own wartime experiences gave him a foreknowledge of some of the problems involved. In the Western Desert of North Africa in 1942 he had been captured by a German unit, but escaped by leaping into a ravine under rifle fire. He then made his way over 20 miles of arid terrain back to British Eighth Army positions.

Ironically, he was recaptured five months later by the same German unit, and this time there was to be no quick escape. After being shipped to Italy, he was imprisoned for a year and then put on a train for Germany. But he gave his guards the slip, jumped off the moving train in daylight between Tivoli and Rome and went into hiding. He was helped by an Italian peasant, who hid him under a cartload of cabbages and took him to safety. He was next guided to 47 Allied escapees who were living in conditions of extreme hardship in a nearby village, and took over their welfare. He contacted the Vatican, who sent money to ease the plight of his adopted men.

When the Germans occupied the area, he travelled to Rome at great personal risk. He contacted an Irish priest, Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty, and was harboured in the diplomatic backwater of the Vatican, at the same time arranging for the organisation of the welfare of the original 47 men. Meanwhile, in the Vatican he took



command of a small underground network which he rapidly expanded, arranging the escape of 4,000 Allied servicemen in the space of eight months. Safe houses, food, clothes, supplies and money were procured for ex-prisoners in and near Rome, and through agents similar arrangements were made for thousands of Allied escapees hiding in the countryside.

In the course of his work, Derry sometimes left the sanctuary of the Vatican, wearing an ill-fitting blue suit, lent by the British Minister to the Holy See, Sir Francis D'Arcy Godolphin Osborne. When travelling on trains he always pretended to doze, thus concealing his inability to understand or speak Italian. The Germans learnt about Derry's organisation in January 1944

but, despite efforts to thwart his activities, he continued to operate successfully until the Allies entered Rome in June that year.

His wife had learnt that he was alive and in Rome when a tiny photograph was smuggled to her in England at Christmas 1943. It was a picture of her husband, with the cupola of St Peter's towering behind him.

Derry was awarded the DSO in 1944. The citation, referring to the Rome escape line, said: "The secret and perilous nature of the organisation, the difficulty of establishing and maintaining contact with agents and escapees, the co-ordination of the efforts of representatives of the United Nations on behalf of the compatriots called for a leader endowed with the rare qualities

of brilliant organising abilities, unlimited initiative, great tact and a sure and balanced judgment."

Sam Ironmonger Derry was born in Newark, Nottinghamshire, and educated at the local Magnus Grammar School. At 22 he was commissioned in the Territorial Army. Sent to France with the British Expeditionary Force on the outbreak of war, he later took part in the evacuation of Dunkirk. He was next posted to the Middle East, serving in Syria and Iraq. During the Iraqi rebellion in 1941, he joined up with Kingcol, one of the forces that regained the airbase at Habbaniya and entered Baghdad.

As a major in the 1st Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, he subsequently fought in the Western Desert, where he won an immediate award of the Military Cross in an action in which seven of 28 opposing tanks were knocked out near Sidi Barrani.

Captured for the second time near Mersah Matruh in June 1942, Derry was taken to Italy and imprisoned at Chieti in the Abruzzo region. For six months in 1943 he was in charge of the escape committee and organised the construction of four tunnels through which a steady stream of men found freedom, before his own second escape, from a Rome-bound train en route to what was intended to be his final incarceration in a German prison camp.

After the liberation of Rome in 1944, Derry had an audience with Pope Pius XII, who remained unaware that the young officer had been his guest in the Vatican for many months. His experiences were described in his book *The Rome Escape Line* (1964), and as a result he was the subject of a *This Is Your Life* programme in 1963.

Derry was a man of great presence and with a warm and compassionate nature. After the war he rejoined the family firm of heating engineers and devoted much time to civic affairs in Newark. He was a magistrate, a town councillor and tireless organiser for hospitals, the Royal British Legion and many charities. He had been a Deputy Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire since 1979.

He is survived by his wife, Nancy, whom he married in 1939, and by four sons and a daughter.

TONY WILMOT

Tony Wilmot, Permanent Secretary in Ghana and founding Principal of the first postgraduate theological college in Africa, died on December 14 aged 81. He was born on June 24, 1915.

TONY WILMOT had a distinguished and wide-ranging career in Africa, entering the Colonial Service straight from university. As assistant district commissioner for Zambia from 1938 to 1940, he developed such a facility in Chibemba that it was said his accent was indistinguishable from that of a native speaker. He was appointed senior cipher officer to the 11th African Division in the East African Campaign, reaching the rank of lieutenant-colonel and being mentioned in dispatches. After the fall of Addis Ababa, he became Secretary to the Government of British Somaliland at the age of 29.

Wilmot spent nine years in the Gold Coast (now Ghana), becoming Permanent Secretary in 1954. This period saw the completion of the Volta Dam Project and of Tema Harbour under his guidance. Throughout this time, he displayed a strong sense of identity with the indigenous population, preferring to travel some distance to church instead of joining the local congregation which — typical of those days — was "for Europeans only". When visiting his wife in hospital after their first set of twins was born (another was to be born later) he was caught up in riots in Accra and narrowly escaped with his life. Recognising him, a local church leader rushed from his home, and pleaded with the crowd to leave him as he was "a good man".

Anthony Talbot de Burgh Wilmot was born in Shoreham, Kent, and educated at Tonbridge School, then at St Edmund Hall, Oxford, where



he read English. In 1938 he gained a hockey Blue. He also served on the Oxford Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (OICCU) executive. Never losing interest in student life, and at a time of unprecedented growth among Christian groups in African universities, he was the moving spirit in setting up the Pan-African Fellowship of Evangelical Students.

He was a man of great energy, and he would always look at things as they were and then at what could be. That trait was evident on two levels: in the role he played in the political and economic development of West Africa, and in the way he identified potential in young people, and built on it. One such young man was Eneke Anyaoku, whom he recruited as an undergraduate in Ibadan University, and who rose to Secretary-General of the Commonwealth.

Wilmot joined the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) in 1956 and, after a year in Singapore, was appointed West African regional controller. A major aspect of his job was to encourage Western business to go into countries before they became independent, and he travelled widely. After his spell with the

CDC he acted as a "company doctor", visiting businesses in several countries, then became managing director of a large West African conglomerate.

But his interests stretched beyond the political and economic, and under the inspiration of Byang Kato, a leading Nigerian Christian, one of his great hopes was to see postgraduate theological training carried out on the African continent. Postgraduate in theology at that time had to go to the West. He wanted African pastors trained to meet the specific needs of African congregations, and qualified to teach the Bible accurately. Nairobi seemed the best location for this and he sought property near the city, eventually finding some land in Karen (named after Karen Blixen of *Out of Africa*).

He went to the United States in 1979 to raise \$200,000 for 18 acres on which there then stood just three chicken runs and a dogfold factory. The Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology was opened in 1983 with four students under a Zimbabwean Dean, and with Wilmot as Principal. It has now trained some 200 pastors and theological teachers.

Throughout all his years in Africa, he maintained a close link with the Evangelical Church of St Nicholas, Sevenoaks, Kent. He also played a major role in an ambitious building project which was the first of its kind anywhere in the world — to dig under a medieval church in order to provide needed extra space. The cost was over £2 million, almost entirely raised within the congregation. Wilmot's business acumen, permeated by his faith, drove the project through to completion in 1995.

He married in 1946 and leaves his widow Eve, for 50 years his closest companion and constant support, five sons and two daughters.

DAN FLAVIN

Dan Flavin, American sculptor, died as a result of diabetes on November 30 aged 63. He was born on April 1, 1933.

DAN FLAVIN was one of the central figures of the Minimalist movement that rose to prominence in America in the 1960s, and which has since

become a staple of art collections and museums worldwide. In one sense he was perhaps the most Minimalist of all in that, since the early Sixties, he stuck to the same, simple medium: standard neon tubes — sometimes coloured, often as not plain white — and nothing else. And since Flavin usually had these stan-

dard tubes installed by electricians and engineers, his work might appear to be more about an artistic concept than a physical entity or even effect.

This was the point rather sardonically argued by the artist and critic Joseph Kosuth in his seminal essay, *Art after Philosophy*, in 1969: "When somebody 'buys' a Flavin, he

isn't buying a light show, for if he was he could just go to a hardware store and get the goods for considerably less. He isn't 'buying' anything. He is subsidising Flavin's activity as an artist."

In fact, Flavin's pieces were real experiences. They shared the theatricality of much Minimal art and, if not a vulgar

"light show", they did make subtle and effective use of the power of light to alter the nature of a given space. Glowing in rows, propped in corners or aligned like organ pipes, they could enchant or move as well as heighten the beholder's sense of his surroundings. Flavin was painting with disembodied colour. And while he never sought to disguise the non-aesthetic aspects of his objects (the metal supports and clips), or to hide the sources of his effects, nor did he shut out the inevitable spiritual associations of his material. Flavin himself described the general process with characteristic matter-of-factness: "We are pressing downward to no art — a neutral pleasure of seeing, known to everyone."

Unlike his chosen medium, Dan Flavin was a thick-set,

gruff and sometimes caustic character. He was born in New York, to an Irish Catholic truant officer and a mother whom he would later describe as corpulent and obtuse. A religious upbringing and a spell as an altar boy made him familiar with the theatre of light and shadow that is the Mass, and for a while Flavin considered training at a seminary. Instead, he attended the New School of Social Research, where he was strongly influenced by the teaching of Hans Hoffmann. This was the late 1950s, and his first painterly efforts came in on the tail end of Abstract Expressionism. Soon, however, he began adding bits of text from the Bible or the works of James Joyce. Eventually, he abandoned traditional media altogether and made monochrome reliefs containing

coloured electric light bulbs, which he called "icons".

The first neon works date back to 1963, and the first exhibitions to 1964. Flavin's works were shown alongside those by Donald Judd, Robert Morris and Carl Andre; thus Minimalism was born. Years later, however, Flavin's experiments with different qualities of light and more complex spatial arrangements would lead some critics to describe his compositions in terms of symphonies or sonatas. The artist himself preferred to describe them as homages: the *Monument* (1964) and *Homage* (1966) to Vladimir Tatlin consist of rows of white strips on the ground, their light cooling and their arrangement evoking early Soviet architecture, or Constructivism itself. But other homages were addressed to Matisse and Bran-

cusi, and there was even one to Flavin's dog.

An established figure on the New York art scene, Flavin was consecrated with an almost flamboyant show at the Guggenheim in 1992, taking advantage of the event to celebrate his second marriage to Tracy Harris. In Europe (if not in England), his work features prominently in the Panza di Biuno collection (Italy), and he recently designed an arrangement of red and blue neon for the outside of the Hamburger Bahnhof, which now houses the National Gallery of Berlin.

At the time of his death he was working on a giant installation for the Chinati Foundation set up in Marfa, Texas. It was to consist of pink, green, yellow and blue neon lines to be distributed along six corridors built in a U-shape.

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CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENTS.

Yesterday, long regarded as the national holiday of the year, was more generally observed as a day of recreation than any of its preceding anniversaries, owing to its having become, by an Act of the late Session, a statute holiday. The first of these, our readers will recollect, was on the first Monday in August, when the beauty of the weather entranced the pleasure of a new statute holiday and a glorious summer day invited all those who were enabled to devote themselves to recreation to take their pleasure in the country, amid green fields and verdant foliage, where, escaping from the noxious air of an overcrowded metropolis, they recruited and invigorated their bodies with fresh pure country air. Judging from yesterday, we may safely predicate that future statute holidays will be regarded to all intents and purposes as close holidays. A fine Christmas-day was succeeded by a dampish evening, followed by a morning of threatening aspect, which ushered in a more uninviting and depressing holiday than it has been our fortune of late to observe. It must have been a question of serious debate with many how to spend the day which the generality of the British public loves to devote to jollity and fun,

ON THIS DAY

December 27, 1871

Following this article long reviews were given of Tom Thumb at Drury Lane and Bluebeard at Covent Garden.

and when the thoughts of every one are directed to leisure and enjoyment. The shops in all the thoroughfares of the metropolis were almost universally closed, only an occasional one being observed open here and there. The streets were during the whole of the day a most desolate appearance, and, as a slight downfall commenced early in the morning and continued with but little intermission during the day, the aspect of the London thoroughfares was cheerless in the extreme. Owing to the badness of the weather there was little or no chance of outdoor exercise or amusement, and so the greater part had to stay at home, or to visit the various day entertainments which exist in London. The

different exhibitions, &c. were crowded to an unusual degree, and in many of them locomotion was difficult, and in some well nigh impossible.

Four pantomimes in central London exceed the usual number. In the suburbs managers adhere, as always, to the national form of entertainment, and Harlequin is at home at the Surrey, Astley's, the Standard, and elsewhere in remote parts.

The directors of what may be called the "comedy" theatres look down with wonted indifference on the almanack. The Haymarket, with Mr. W. S. Gilbert's *Pagania* and *Galatea*, the Prince of Wales's, with the late Mr. T. W. Robertson's revived *Caste*, and the Globe, with Mr. H. J. Byron's *Partners for Life*, are clearly set up for the season, and heedless of holiday supplements. Similarly unchangeable are the "dramatic" Olympic, with Mr. W. Collins's *Woman in White*, and the "dramatic" Lyceum, with *Le Juif Polonais*, which, as the *Bells*, derives a thoroughly English vitality from the acting of Mr. Irving. Mr. A. Halliday's *Notre Dame* is revived at the Adelphi, and the *Tempest* remains at the Queen's till the end of the week, to be followed, after a short interval, by a dramatized version of Lord Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii*.

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TODAY



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Who comes out
top in the magic
numbers game?
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FRIDAY DECEMBER 27 1996

Lloyd lost for words as batting collapse plunges Zimbabwe tour into deeper trouble

England shirk test of endurance

FROM SIMON WILDE IN HARARE

HARARE (first day of five; Zimbabwe won toss; England have scored 137 for nine wickets against Zimbabwe)

SO MUCH for "murdering" the opposition in the first Test, so much for Zimbabwe preparing another slow pitch and playing for a draw, so much for the benefits of the players being without their families at Christmas. Whatever theories one adheres to, there comes a time when reality has to be faced and, in the case of England's beleaguered cricket team, they have to perform.

They did not do so yesterday. That their batting failed so woefully, and with such wilful self-destruction, on the first day of the second Test, almost defies explanation and left even David Lloyd, their coach, whose comments have had an unfortunate tendency to rebound on him on this tour, all but lost for words.

"I can't explain it," he said. "It is, by a long way, the worst day of my England coaching career."

If Lloyd has tended to express his thoughts too readily, his players showed similar impatience on a predictably lifeless pitch yesterday. Had they accepted that runs were never going to come easily, especially over a sluggish outfield, and stuck to the modest task of scoring, say, 180 for three over the course of the day, they might be well-placed, rather than staring an ignominious defeat in the face.

That simple strategy was

beyond them, and although Lloyd may be reluctant to suggest the reasons, explanations have to be forthcoming. Two worthy of consideration are that, on the one hand, England habitually under-perform and, on another, they have habitually underestimated the abilities of these particular opponents — none more so than Guy Whittall, whose seemingly innocuous medium-paced bowling helped thwart their run-chase in the first Test and who yesterday returned the stunning analysis of 13-5-12-4.

Whittall is regarded by his team as a useful partnership-breaker and he lived up to that

Ambrose's high five 25
Prasad on song 25
Hollisake held up 25

reputation by ending three of the four largest stands of the day. Damningly for England, these amounted to just 26, 21 and 34. His success inspired speculation as to when an equally ordinary bowler last did so well at Test level, but to pursue such inquiries is to commit the same mistake that the England batsmen made yesterday. If a bowler drops the ball on the right spot on a pitch as turgid as this one, he cannot be treated lightly. Streak also exploited the conditions skilfully, swinging the ball away from the bat and being rewarded with three important wickets.

The day was a tactical triumph for Zimbabwe from the moment that Alistair Campbell won the toss and put in England, taking the risk of handing them the initiative and spending the rest of the game playing catch-up.

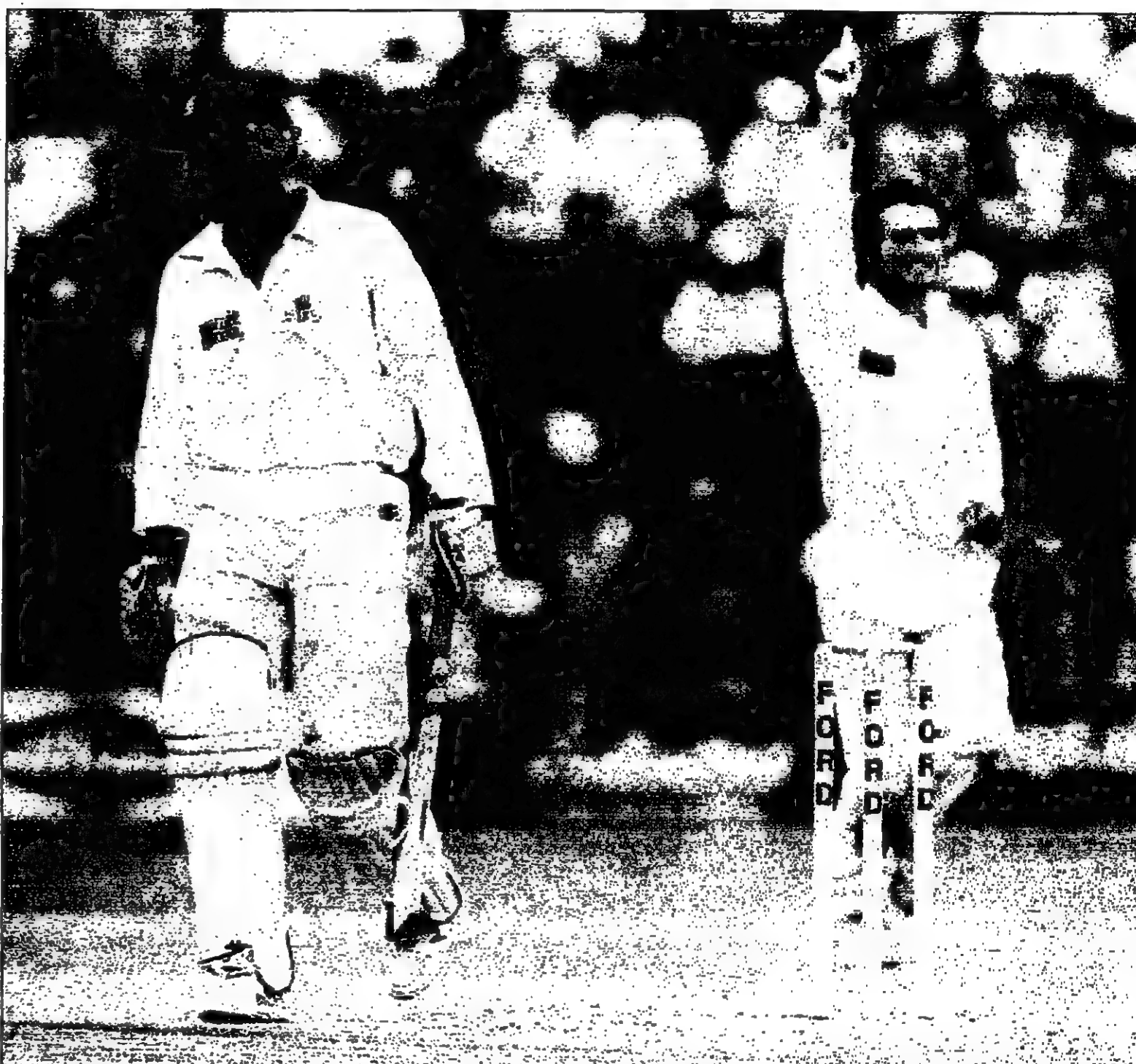
England negotiated the dangerous first hour for the loss of Knight, who looked good until he gloved a leg-side catch to the wicketkeeper off Olunga. The game was not long into its second hour, however, when it became clear that Campbell's gamble was paying off. England gave way to frustration and the wickets started to tumble.

Indeed, Knight's wicket was the last that they lost that was not directly of their own making as Zimbabwe's bowlers stuck rigorously to their line-and-length policy. If England had a game plan, there was little evidence of it. Atherton, Stewart, Hussain, White and Croft all perished attempting to drive, a stroke placed with danger when the ball holds up as it did here, while Thorpe was outwitted, Dekker being placed at short square leg for his favoured clip off the pads. The remainder went quietly, as England tails are inclined to these days, before bad light brought an early close with 17 overs unbowed.

Only Crawley showed anything like the necessary application. He has so far batted three hours for 37, having spent six hours compiling 112 in the first Test, when he also outlived a succession of partners.

The chances of Tufnell surviving long with him this morning and adding much-needed runs must be remote. Unless they add ten, England will collect the unwanted record of the lowest Test total achieved against Zimbabwe.

Arguably the key period of the day was that in which Atherton and Stewart fell in successive overs, when England were first attempting to break free of their shackles. A clear warning of the dangers of driving was issued in the eighteenth over when Campbell spun a routine chance at first slip off Streak to retrieve Stewart. In the very next over, however, Atherton gave Campbell an immediate chance to make amends off Olunga, and seven balls later



Atherton, the England captain, slinks away in anguish after being caught off the bowling of Whittall, right. Photograph: Howard Burditt

Stewart was well held by Grant Flower, diving to his right in the gully.

Atherton has more than once avowed his enthusiasm for the game on this tour but, in the last nine days, during which he has failed three times in the Tests, he has appeared jaded and lacking in rhythm. Thorpe seems equally

out of form, having struggled badly for runs since joining the tour late, shortly after the birth of his first child. Perhaps he more than most is suffering from the enforced three-month separation from families.

No less satisfactory was the performance of White, drafted in to give the side "balance" but who appeared to get worse

as his hour-long stay continued. He survived one convincing appeal for leg-before by Strang before giving a catch to first slip off Whittall that he needlessly waited for the umpire to confirm. Nevertheless, he did not deserve the uncharitable abuse heaped on him by a small section of the crowd as he returned to the pavilion.

Pearce's smile erased by rampant United

Nottingham Forest
Manchester United

BY ANDREW LONGMORE

STUART PEARCE was right. He should have quit while he was on top, while his management record read: played one, won one. Yesterday, Manchester United came to the City Ground and left with another four goals to bring their Christmas tally to nine and a victory so casually won, so breathtaking in its command and embarrassing in its simplicity that the FA Carling Premiership title could be all over by the time United play their European Cup quarter-final in the spring.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	20	11	6	3	37	19	38
Arsenal	19	10	6	3	35	19	34
Man Utd	19	9	7	3	41	25	34
Wimbledon	18	10	4	4	30	22	34
Aston Villa	18	10	3	5	28	17	31
Newcastle	18	9	4	5	28	17	31
Chelsea	19	8	7	4	30	27	31

The Forest revival, heralded after an unlikely victory over Arsenal, ended with barely a whimper and, to add to United's perfect day, Andy Cole returned for his first game since the FA Cup Final and scored within five minutes.

The United faithful were in good voice, running through a repertoire of Christmas ditties, safe in the knowledge that once the first had gone in, after 25 minutes, there was no danger to their supremacy. They were aided, though, by Pearce's tactical innocence. If Arsenal

were bewildered by the formation concocted by Pearce and his wife over a late-night cup of tea, United — and Giggs, in particular — could hardly believe their luck this time.

Faced by a confused Saunders, whose instincts are hardly tuned to the grating role of wing back, Giggs pulled the right of the Forest defence hither and thither, forcing Pearce to revert to the tried and trusted 4-4-2 after half-time. By then, though, the match was gone; United were two goals up and able to turn the second half into an exhibition.

Both of United's first-half goals flowed down their left. The first came midway through the half, when an interchange of passes between Giggs, Cantona and Solskjaer left the Nor-

wegian free to cross deep to Beckham, who had time to control and chip the ball delicately into Crossley's top right-hand corner.

The second was similar in construction and execution. Giggs, his

Shearer frosts out 22
Bosnich blunders 23
Wolves show teeth 24

balance ideally suited to the froster half of the pitch, turned away from Jerkan and Hasaland, crossed back for Scholes to drive the ball into Pearce, only for Butt to crack the rebound low past Crossley.

In between, Giggs was left alone

eight yards out but, with the whole goal to aim for, drove the ball past the post and into an advertising hoarding announcing, ominously for Forest, "Give me five." Pearce was doubtless trying to summon up words of encouragement for his half-time team talk, but there was not much he could do. His team looked dispirited, short of class at the front and short of fight in midfield, where Hasaland, the two-goal hero against Arsenal, had a pedestrian afternoon.

There are too many players in Forest not earning their wages and Pearce's first job might be to find out why, or the new consortium, whoever they might be, will find themselves in charge of a first division club.



Beckham wheels away in triumph after putting Manchester United in front at the City Ground yesterday

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BY SYDNEY FRISKIN

Jon Mulloy, of Surbiton, will lead the attack for the Cheam Presidents' XI in the Dick Hollands memorial match against the Cheam XI on the artificial turf pitch at the London Transport ground, North Cheam, tomorrow.

□ England will face strong opposition in the golden jubilee tournament in Karachi from March 16 to 23. Four other visiting sides — Holland, the Olympic champions, Germany, Australia and South Korea, the Asian champions — will join Pakistan, the World Cup holders, in the six-nation competition.

Komen: dedicated

John Hopkins continues a review by Times writers of sporting highlights of 1996

Norman's world collapses into nightmare

I was quiet in the restaurant at the Partridge Inn in Augusta on the morning of Sunday, April 14, as Dave Marr patrolled the breakfast buffet, helping himself to tea, toast and yoghurt before retiring to a corner table with the newspapers and a cigarette. There he peered over his half-moon spectacles and spoke of what might unfold later on the last day of the Masters.

"It's going to be interesting," Marr said repeatedly in his Texas drawl. Whereas these words can sound banal, when spoken by Marr, a professional golfer for most of his life, they seemed invested with extra significance. It was as if the 1965 US PGA champion, now a much respected television commentator on both sides of the Atlantic, knew that something was afoot. Yet even he could not have guessed precisely what would occur when Greg Norman started the fourth round with a six-stroke lead over Nick Faldo.

All we suspected was that something would happen because it almost always did on the Sunday of the Masters. Look at the way Ed Sneed lost a three-stroke lead with three holes remaining in 1979. Remember how Balleserius hit a four-iron into the water in front of the 15th green just as Nicklaus, then 46, was charging through the field to win in 1980. Think of Sandy Lyle's fantastic bunker stroke on the last hole in 1988 and Nicklaus's 45-foot putt on the 16th in 1975. How did Fred Couples's ball defy gravity on the bank of the 12th hole when he won in 1992, and what extraordinary influence was it that spirited Gene Sarazen's ball into the hole for an albatross two on the 15th in 1935?

It did not take long after Norman and Faldo had teed off to realise that golfing history was unfolding in front of our eyes. Norman failed to get his par from a bunker on the first, bogeyed the 4th, pulled his approach to the 8th, and made a mistake with his second on the 9th. Faldo, meanwhile, was playing steady golf, scoring well and piling the pressure on to



'In victory Faldo spoke generous words'

Norman. At the 9th, after an outward half of 34, he had closed to within two strokes.

On the 10th, Norman missed the green by inches but chipped poorly and two-putted and on the 11th he missed a three-foot putt for his par. On the 12th, Faldo moved into a two-stroke lead when Norman's seven-iron tee shot entered the water and he took a five to Faldo's three.

No matter where you were at this time the atmosphere was extraordinary. For Laura Norman, Greg's wife, and Frank Williams, his manager, following Greg that afternoon must have resembled walking behind a condemned man to the gallows. "How is Laura?" Williams was asked on the 10th.

"She's a wreck," he replied. As Norman's ball disappeared into the water on the 12th, Williams silently put a consoling arm around Laura's shoulders. Even the spectators had become silent and uneasy. "I feel sick to my stomach," one said.

The tiered press room at Augusta is normally a place of laughter and jokes, where some journalists still crash away at typewriters while others peck silently at their computers. Some even watch the golf. This time, however, the people in this large room were eerily quiet. They were watching one of the saddest sights in sport.

The fourth rounds of major championships are often magnificent demonstrations of mental fortitude as much as physical skill. Look at Balleserius at Lytham in 1988. Norman at St George's in 1993. Tom Watson and Nicklaus at Turnberry in 1977 and again at Pebble Beach in 1982. No one wanted the 1996 Masters to end like this. At this point the story takes



Faldo goes grimly about his business in the fourth round at Augusta which was to see one of the greatest turnarounds in golfing history

another twist. Starting on the par-five 13th, Norman staged something of a rally by holing from 14 feet for a birdie to match Faldo's four. On the next, Norman got a steady par four whereas, to get his par, Faldo had to produce the stroke of the round from within the trees on the right. Norman almost chipped in for an eagle three on the 15th.

Norman's rally only heightened what had happened before. Surely he could not throw away eight strokes to Faldo and then get back into contention?

Indeed, he could not. On the 16th, Norman hit into the guardian pond and Faldo moved four strokes ahead. A final flourish of a birdie on the 18th gave him victory by five

strokes. It was his third green jacket and his sixth major championship victory. There had been an 11-stroke swing from Norman to Faldo in the 18 holes.

In victory, Faldo showed a degree of grace and sympathy that had not been expected and he spoke some generous words to Norman as they embraced on the 18th green. Later he said: "I hope the tournament is remembered for his shooting a 67 in the last round and not for what happened to Greg. Unfortunately I think they'll remember Greg."

Poor Norman went through the rest of the day with his head held high when he could have wanted nothing more than to flee the clubhouse and the glare of publicity.

It was as great an act of moral courage as anyone could have shown. And perhaps if Norman had been paired with any player other than Faldo, it would not have been necessary.

When the day was over, the mind went back to what Marr had said. Rarely have the words "it is going to be interesting" been borne out so accurately. It was not just the most interesting day of the year: it may have been the most memorable sporting day of the past quarter of a century.

TOMORROW

Oliver Holt recalls the dramatic climax of penalty demons at Euro 96



Norman receives a consoling hug from his conqueror

SAILING: SPIRIT OF GOODWILL WIDESPREAD AS BRITON GOES TO RESCUE OF FELLOW COMPETITOR WHILE CHALLENGE CREW RALLY ROUND SKIPPER

Goss finds entente on the high seas

By Edward Gorman
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

PETE GOSS, of Great Britain, who has recently enjoyed his best week's racing in the Vendée Globe single-handed non-stop round-the-world race, was last night attempting to rescue one of his fellow competitors after being asked to divert from his course by race headquarters in Paris.

Goss, on his Adrian Thompson-designed "Open 50" *Aqua Quorum*, was going to windward in 40-50 knots trying to get in the stricken Frenchman, Raphael Dinelli, who got into trouble on Christmas Day, deep in the Southern Ocean about 1,200 miles southwest of Perth.

In a brief message to *The Times* yesterday, Goss indicated that he had, himself, experienced several knock-downs in the same storm that has put Dinelli out of the race and now in grave danger. "Very bad last night," he reported, "trying to get to him - knocked down many times. Am 25 miles away, cross your fingers, night setting in and forecast 40 knots."



Goss: sent to rescue

It is not known exactly what happened to Dinelli, whose yacht *Agile IV*. However, on Christmas Day he reported very heavy conditions with winds gusting in excess of 70 knots. Two hours later two of his emergency radio beacons were activated, indicating he was in trouble.

The closest competitor to him was the Belgian skipper, Patrick de Radigue, on *Afibel* just 84 miles away, but he could not be contacted by

Paris because both his radio and his satellite fix are broken. Goss, whose radio is also broken for the second time in the race, was 150 miles away but the next closest.

Early yesterday a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) rescue aircraft spotted both Dinelli and Goss. The crew reported that Dinelli waved to them but that his yacht was lying on its side with its mast still intact. There appeared to be damage at the bow which was down in the water. Dinelli was reported last night to have boarded a life raft on instructions from the RAAF rescue plane.

Dinelli, aged 28 from Bordeaux, is a very experienced sailor with more than 11,000 miles under his belt prior to the race. But his status in the race has always been controversial. Although he started with the rest of the field, he has not formally been admitted to the Vendée Globe because he failed to complete his 2,000-mile qualifying sail within the time allotted by the race committee. He was thus an "unclassified" entrant who could not win, though he was

in a nominal eighth position when he got into trouble.

Goss, meanwhile, has had a terrific last week during which he has averaged among the highest speeds in the fleet in excess of 12 knots. This has taken him from ninth up to seventh, moving back ahead of de Radigue and Catherine Chabaud on *Whirlpool Europe 2*. Yesterday he was only 450 miles behind Eric Dumont, of France, in sixth place. The race leader, 2,500 miles east of Goss, is still Christophe Auguin, also of France, on *Geodis*.

Race headquarters confirmed yesterday that Goss will be eligible for redress for time lost rescuing Dinelli. Philippe Jeantot, the race director, said it would be up to the two skippers to work out the next. Goss might drop Dinelli at New Zealand or somewhere near Cape Horn.

Jeantot added that Goss's performance in the only 50-footer in the race was making him many friends and admirers in France. "He has sailed a very, very good race and proved his seamanship," Jeantot said.

Donovan receives backing from crew of Heath Insured

By Edward Gorman

THE crew of the BT Global Challenge yacht, *Heath Insured II*, have rallied round their skipper, Adrian Donovan, after a report in *The Times* that he may be sacked by Chay Blyth when he gets to Wellington.

In a letter to *The Times*, the crew said they are particularly keen to correct impressions given by sources familiar with the yacht and its sponsor, the City Insurance firm, C.E. Heath, that morale on board *Heath Insured II*, which is limping along in last place, is not all that it could be.

In a message signed by everybody on board except Donovan himself, the crew say they do not wish to get involved in any dispute, "actual or alleged, between Adrian Donovan, Chay Blyth or the Heath Group," but go on to say that it is "simply not true" that morale and motivation are low.

"Crew spirits are high and we look forward to continuing

on together from Wellington after a well-deserved break. We all have the utmost respect for Adrian Donovan as a seaman and skipper and would strongly oppose any attempt to replace him," the crew said.

The letter follows disclosures that Donovan and Blyth fell out badly last week after the yacht suffered a serious rig failure which has put it out of contention for this leg. Donovan told Blyth he considered the race to be no more than a "farce" with six boats carrying damaged rigs. Blyth responded by warning he will be sacked in New Zealand.

The fleet, meanwhile, has been doing its best to enjoy Christmas. On *Toshiba Wave Warrior*, now in third place, two volunteers prepared a lunch of turkey, chipolatas, mash, stuffing, peas, cranberry jelly, roast potatoes and carrots, followed by Christmas pudding with brandy butter and vanilla sauce.

On *Commercial Union* the crew reported excellent sailing conditions on Christmas Day, with gales that had been forecast failing to appear. There were champagne, Christmas cards and presents for all on board plus the chance to listen to taped messages recorded by relatives before the yacht set sail from Rio. "It was a Christmas that none of us will ever forget, but definitely not one to be repeated," the crew reported.

The leader is still the victor in the first leg, Mike Golding on *Group 4*, who has 500 miles to sail to Wellington. He is being chased hard in lightish conditions by Andy Hindley's *Save The Children*, which is about 30 miles astern. *Toshiba* is in third, followed by a thicket of boats fighting it out for fourth, led by *Global Teamwork* and followed by *Motorola*, *Pause To Remember*, *Commercial Union* and *Nuclear Electric*.

Robinson loss

Football: Bobby Robinson, the former Scotland player, has died at his Forfar home at the age of 46. Robinson, who won four caps in 1974 and 1975, enjoyed a successful career spanning three decades. He played for Falkirk, Dundee, Dundee United, Heart of Midlothian and Raith Rovers.

Smith out

Swimming: Graeme Smith, the Olympic bronze medal-winner has been forced to pull out of next month's world short course championships in Gothenburg because of educational commitments.

White sacked

American football: Mike White has been dismissed as coach of Oakland Raiders - the fifth National Football League coach to lose his job in five days.

CYCLING

Obree gears up for trip to New Zealand

By Peter Bryan

GRAEME OBREE, Britain's world pursuit champion in 1995, has recovered from leg injuries sustained when a gas cylinder fell on him and will make his return to competition in New Zealand next month.

"I have just started training again, concentrating on strength work, which means pushing a high gear up some of our local climbs," Obree said from his home in Irvine. "My form is not as good as I would want but in view of the health problems I have had during the past season, I am satisfied."

Obree's aim is to use his three-week tour of New Zealand - where he expects to race in road and track

events - to prepare for a serious, uncompetitive programme in the United Kingdom on his return, starting with local time-trials.

Obree said that his commitment to international events will be governed by the aid he receives. He has had tentative talks with a potential sponsor. Robin Jackson marked his change of club - from Reading CC to Hounslow and District - with a one-second victory in the Essex Roads ten-mile trial near Chelmsford yesterday. He beat local specialist, Martin Meads, of Romford, with a time of 23min 35sec, more than three minutes outside his personal best but good enough to please him in chilling conditions.

FOR THE RECORD

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

HONOLULU Aloha Bowl. New 42 California 38

ATHLETICS

ROAD RUNNING. Preston Park, Brighton (5.9m). Men: 1. D. Brown (Brighton) and Peter 20min 23sec. 2. K. Marks (Brighton) 22:21. Women: 1. L. O'Connell (Brighton) 35:45. Women: 1. S. Murray (Brighton) 1:00:11. 2. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 3. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 4. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 5. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 6. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 7. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 8. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 9. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 10. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 11. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 12. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 13. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 14. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 15. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 16. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 17. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 18. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 19. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 20. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 21. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 22. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 23. J. Kinnear (Brighton) 1:01:11. 24. J. 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RACING: ENIGMATIC PRIDWELL AMONG A COMPETITIVE FIELD FOR KEMPTON'S CHRISTMAS HURDLE

Bimsey looks the safest proposition

By RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

HORSES, like humans, can be complicated characters. Some with limited talent run their hearts out; others may possess a touch of brilliance but are rascals and rarely perform up to their ability.

The Jekyll and Hyde nature possessed by an assortment of thoroughbreds is worth bearing in mind as nine runners line up for the Pertemps Christmas Hurdle (1.10), one of four races televised by Channel 4 at Kempton this afternoon. A quick reading of the form highlights Pridwell



Pridwell, who was reluctant to race at Cheltenham, gets a chance to redeem himself in the Pertemps Christmas Hurdle at Kempton today



as having an obvious chance in the day's feature race.

The Martin Pipe-trained runner put up three performances last season which give him a clear edge over his rivals, including an excellent third in the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham.

If he reproduces that form today, he should win. However, as he showed at Cheltenham 13 days ago, when he dug his toes in at the start and refused to race until the rest of the field were nearer the first hurdle, it is a big if. "Has an awkward head carriage (sometimes looks unwilling): not one to trust implicitly," Timeform reports ominously.

In the circumstances, punters may prefer to look out for a more reliable buyer to carry their cash. Chief's Song, a course and distance winner, is consistent but probably lacks the class for this. Zabadi caused an upset by defeating Urubande at Newbury last

time but must improve again, as must Mistinguet, a winner at Ascot last Saturday. Bimsey has not been without his problems but, unlike those of Pridwell, they have been physical rather than mental. A sore back kept him off the racecourse for a year but the Reg Akehurst-trained runner showed he had lost none of his sparkle when finishing half a length behind Large Action — with the recalcitrant Pridwell a distant fifth — at Cheltenham. Bimsey will enjoy the prevailing fast ground and is taken to go one better.

Although the Pertemps City Network Handicap Chase (1.40) has attracted only five runners, there should be plenty of pace with Five To Seven, Lackadara and the out-form Senor El Bernini all looking to dictate from the front. Given the way the race will be run, this could be tied up for Big Matt and Southampton, who are normally held up.

Big Matt, a course and distance winner, will appreciate returning to a right-handed flat track after twice showing his dislike for Cheltenham's undulations. How-

ever, preference is for Southampton, who has run well in defeat this term, notably behind Strong Promise and Major Bell at Ascot last month.

After the success of the Francois Doumen-trained Djedjah yesterday, Vol Par Nuit will command respect in

the Pertemps Cream Novices Amateur Riders' Chase (1.10). However, the French raider may find it hard to keep tabs on Ballyea Boy after victories at Towcester and Exeter.

David Nicholson's progressive chaser never does more than he has to, but should find further improvement now that he is stepped up in trip. He is preferred to Dromhanna. Dextra Dove takes a drop in class in the I.T. Network Handicap Chase (2.50) after running in the Hennessy Gold Cup and Benterware Cup, but his jumping has lacked its

normal fluency this term. Betty's Boy has struggled against the handicapper this term, while Big Ben Dunn has failed to complete on his last two starts.

Golden Spinner, who is best on fast ground, won decisively from Around The Horn at Newbury and has been raised only 5lb for his nine-length success. The step up to three miles will suit this half-brother to The Tsarevich, whom Nicky Henderson hopes will make up into a Grand National horse. He looks the best bet on the card.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: Golden Spinner
(2.50 Kempton Park)
Next best: Fitzwilliam
(12.40 Kempton Park)

SOUTHWELL

THUNDERER
12.15 The Barnaby Belle, 12.45 Share Delight, 1.15 Kalar, 1.45 Hompops, 2.15 Tonika, 2.45 Senate Swings, 3.15 Barrel Of Hope.

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 1.45 Albaha.

GOING: STANDARD

DRAW: 6F-1M, LOW NUMBERS BEST

12.15 FRENCH HEN HANDICAP

(Div 1: £2,575; 1m) (11 runners)

- 1105 RICHMOND PRINCESS 27 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1106 THREE ARCH BRIDGE 9 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1107 IN GOOD FAITH 30 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1108 THE BARRELLY BELLE 19 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1109 RUSH SEA 8 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1110 CATS BOTTOM 6 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1111 BILLY BROWN 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1112 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1113 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1114 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1115 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

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1125 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

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1154 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

1155 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

1.45 PARTHURSE MAIDEN STAKES

(£2,438; 1m 4f) (7 runners)

- 1105 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1106 THREE ARCH BRIDGE 9 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1107 IN GOOD FAITH 30 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1108 THE BARRELLY BELLE 19 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1109 RUSH SEA 8 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1110 CATS BOTTOM 6 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1111 BILLY BROWN 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1112 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1113 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1114 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1115 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

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1127 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

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1161 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

1162 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

MUSSELBURGH

THUNDERER
12.35 Honeychoise, 1.05 Noyan, 1.35 Three Wild Days, 2.05 Barton Heights, 2.40 Weyuphill, 3.15 Lord Lamb.

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 1.45 Albaha.

GOING: GOOD TO FIRM

DRAW: 6F-1M, LOW NUMBERS BEST

12.35 CARRIBY TOWER JUVENILE NOVICES

(Div 1: £1,816; 2m) (10 runners)

- 1105 RICHMOND PRINCESS 27 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1106 THREE ARCH BRIDGE 9 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1107 IN GOOD FAITH 30 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1108 THE BARRELLY BELLE 19 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1109 RUSH SEA 8 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1110 CATS BOTTOM 6 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1111 BILLY BROWN 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1112 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1113 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
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1125 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

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1128 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

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1155 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

WETHERBY

THUNDERER
1.00 Narnodol, 1.30 Baronet, 2.05 Jackie Cross, 2.35 Viking Flagship, 3.05 Mister Trick, 3.35 Alding East.

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 1.45 Albaha.

GOING: GOOD TO SOFT

DRAW: 6F-1M, LOW NUMBERS BEST

1.00 BRADFORD JUVENILE NOVICES

(Div 1: £3,077; 1m) (14 runners)

- 1105 RICHMOND PRINCESS 27 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1106 THREE ARCH BRIDGE 9 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1107 IN GOOD FAITH 30 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1108 THE BARRELLY BELLE 19 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1109 RUSH SEA 8 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1110 CATS BOTTOM 6 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1111 BILLY BROWN 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1112 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1113 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1114 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1115 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1116 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1117 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10
- 1118 HOLLOWAY 16 (D.C.) M. Cane 3-4-10

RACING: RICHARDS KEEN TO TEST CHELTENHAM WATERS AGAIN BEFORE CONSIDERING SECOND BLUE RIBBON ATTEMPT

One Man's victory fuels Gold Cup debate

By JULIAN MURRAY

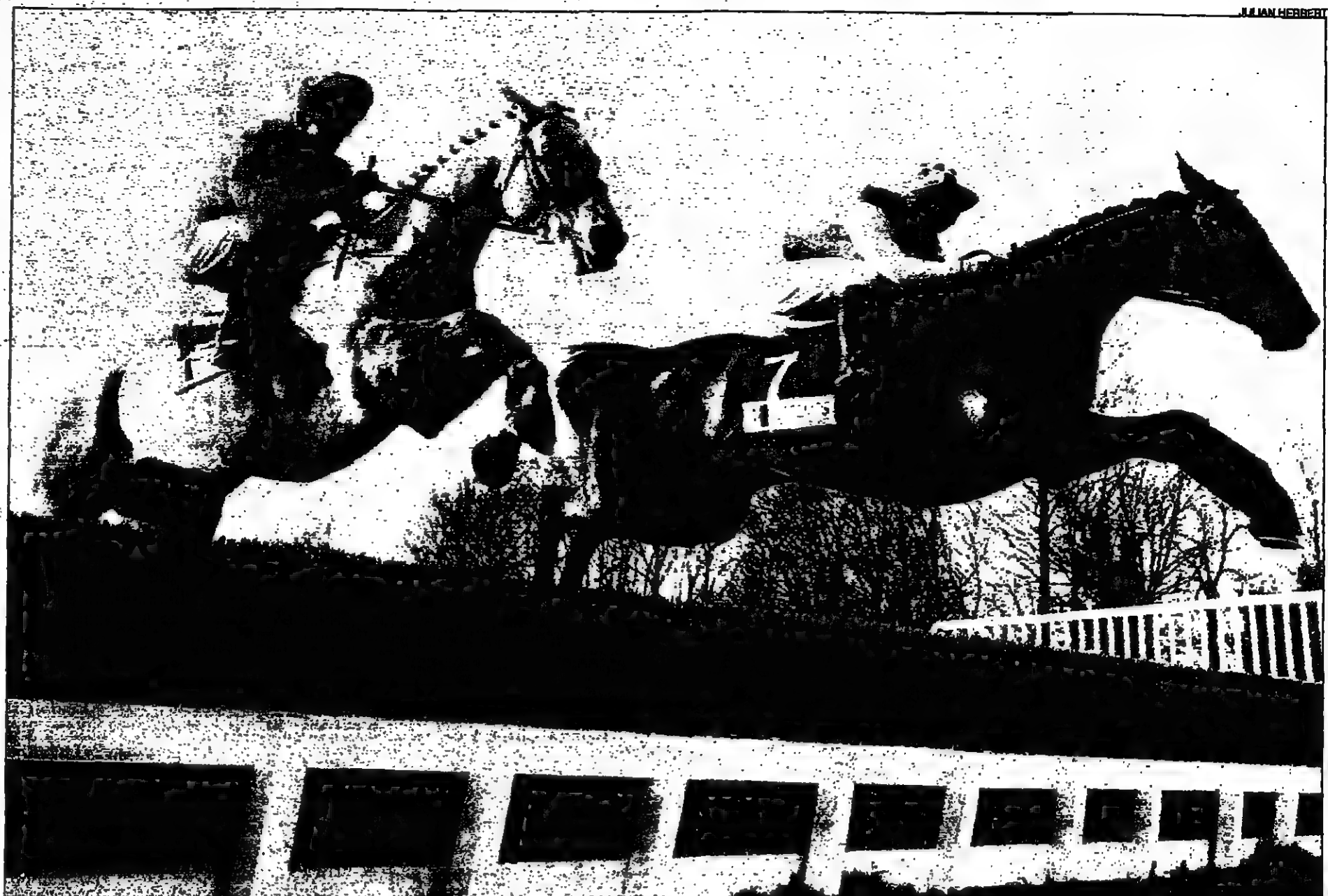
LIKE a nostalgic Christmas production, the nation's love affair with greyhounds was revived at Kempton yesterday when One Man galloped to his second successive victory in the Pertemps King George VI Chase. Desert Orchid led out the parade and his heir apparent led them home after an exhibition of precision racing in course record time.

In a ruthless examination, Mr Mulligan forced the pace to extremes only One Man could match. Rough Quest, Strong Promise and Barton Bank withered away as Mr Mulligan, excited his supporters when stretching clear on the turn for home. But Richard Durwood, riding the grey with measured assurance, retrieved the deficit with no apparent effort. The eight-year-old moved alongside three fences from home, went ahead soon after and drew away from Mr Mulligan before their rival crashed out at the final fence.

It looked entirely straightforward, but the strain told as One Man visibly tired in the closing stages. Indeed, so emphatic was his performance to that point that his laboured passage up this short, undemanding run-in proved the most fascinating aspect of a race depleted beforehand by three withdrawals on account of fast ground.

While he may one day match Desert Orchid's four victories in this event, One Man's prospects of emulating his feat of winning the Cheltenham Gold Cup appear remote. He already has one ignominious failure against his name.

The point obviously played on the minds of One Man's connections. Cheltenham's lure so transcends all others in National Hunt racing that John Hales, who owns One Man, even alluded to the Gold Cup in the moment of celebration. "The horse has now won a Hennessy and this race twice," he said, "but what



The grey, One Man, clears the water jump majestically in company with Strong Promise before taking command in yesterday's King George VI Chase at Kempton

happened at Cheltenham was so disappointing. Everyone has their own opinion about why he ran so badly but we could never put our finger on it. I was just delighted to bring him home safe and sound."

Perhaps the most telling detail was the expression on Durwood's face as he entered the winner's enclosure. If a hint of a smile pursed his lips in recognition of his fourth King George victory, his mind was otherwise engaged. "Half of it was due to him idling and maybe the other half was because he was coming to the end of his tether. After a performance like that, he was entitled to get a bit tired."

Tiredness may also have accounted for Mr Mulligan's

ill-deserved departure at the final fence. Tony McCoy blamed himself for precipitating the fall of the raw-boned chestnut: "I tried to shorten his stride but I let him get in too close to the fence," he said.

Rough Quest, who profited from Mr Mulligan's fall to take second place, was

allowed to coast home untroubled from the final fence. Yet he may even have closed the gap on One Man, who officially won by 12 lengths. The Grand National winner acquitted himself well but Mick Fitzgerald, who rode the horse, reported his mount was never happy. "He hated the

ground. He was jumping and hanging left all the way," he said. Intriguingly, Rough Quest is scheduled to clash with One Man in the Filler Chase at Cheltenham next month. Gordon Richards, who trains One Man, is anxious to trial the horse at Prestbury Park before

committing him to the Gold Cup. "If he can't win that race then I don't think he'll be winning a Gold Cup," he said. "The horse was brilliant today and I'd like to enjoy this before thinking about his next race."

That next outing should dissolve some of the many theories advanced for One

Doumen plans return of Djeddah

FRANCOIS DOUMEN has won the King George four times, but did not have a runner in yesterday's renewal. However, the French trainer still left his mark on the meeting by saddling Djeddah to win the Pertemps Recruitment Partnership Fetham Novices' Chase.

Djeddah stayed on gamely to beat One Man's stable companion, Solomon's

chaser could now return to Kempton for the Racing Post Chase as a prelude to a possible trip to the Cheltenham Festival.

Doumen is not resting on his laurels however. He saddles two more interesting contenders at today's Sunbury Park meeting. Fly Fishing, who has won his last two starts, runs in the Pertemps Caledonian Juvenile Novices' Hurdle, while Vol Par Nuit lines up for the

Pertemps Cream Novices Chase. The fast ground yesterday resulted in See More Business and Fine Thyme being pulled out of Djeddah's race with the former's trainer, Paul Nicholls, less than happy with conditions. "Firstly, it's too quick and, secondly, it's frozen in places and, in my opinion, unsuitable. Four of us walked round and we all came to the same conclusion," he said.

Man's appalling record at Prestbury Park. Richards accepted One Man may just be short of stamina for the Gold Cup; he has mooted the possibility of running in the Champion Chase over two miles. However, as he contemplates his options, Richards is bound to reflect on One Man's record at the spiritual home of jump racing.

One Man has won all his completed starts over fences - with the exception of his two outings at the Cheltenham Festival. His growing legion of supporters concede that does not inspire confidence, but they will doubtless take consolation from the fact that Desert Orchid endured far greater tribulations at Cheltenham before landing the Gold Cup in 1989.

Fixtures feel chill as frost strikes

THE Boxing Day programme was severely hit by the weather for the second successive season. Nine of the 11 scheduled meetings were lost, a year after all ten meetings fell to the weather. Only Kempton Park and Lingfield's all-weather programme survived.

Ayr, Newton Abbot and Wincanton were called off on Wednesday, and frost was the cause of Hereford, Huntingdon, Market Rasen, Sedgfield, Wetherby and Wolverhampton being abandoned yesterday.

Frost has already made inroads into today's racing with Chepstow and Leicester falling victim to the cold snap yesterday. Chepstow was particularly hard hit, losing the Coral Welsh National meeting for the third year in a row. The Welsh National will not be switched to another course, as it was in 1994.

Inspections are planned at Wetherby (7.30), Musselburgh (7.30) and Kempton (8.00). A spokesman for Kempton said: "There is the possibility of low temperatures and, as we have raced today, the ground has been opened up so the frost can get in."

Hopes of racing at Musselburgh are high. "It is perfectly raceable today but there is some frost forecast overnight," the clerk of the course, Mark Kershaw, said yesterday. "To keep people informed we will have a precautionary inspection, but we are very hopeful of racing."

Wetherby inspectors at 7.30 after losing its Boxing Day fixture. A spokesman said: "Hopefully the frost won't be as bad tonight. There are some showers forecast."

Prospects are not bright for the turf meetings tomorrow with inspections already planned at Folkestone (noon today) and Huntingdon (3.00 today).

Frost is also threatening Newbury tomorrow. "We have frost in the ground," the clerk of the course, Richard Pridham, said yesterday. "It is doubtful whether we could have raced today. There is more frost forecast, so it depends on what the daytime temperatures get up to. We will just have to wait and see what happens over the next couple of days."

Klairon Davis can get back on track

By OUR IRISH RACING CORRESPONDENT

KLAIRON DAVIS, the Queen Mother Champion Chase winner, attempts to get his campaign back on track in the McCain Handicap Chase at Leopardstown today. A faller at Punchestown on his last appearance, the Arthur Moore-trained gelding was

beaten by Fiftysevenchannels in a three-horse race at Leopardstown on his seasonal debut.

Klairon Davis, who took time to find his form last season, has to concede upwards of 15lb to four opponents but should be up to the task provided his jumping improves. "I have no doubts about Klairon Davis's jump-

ing and I am confident his fall at Punchestown was just a blip," Moore said yesterday. Merry Gale ran his best race since returning from injury in last April's Punchestown Festival when falling four fences out. He has had just one run since at Fairyhouse, but Moore is confident that Whale Of A Knight is in peak form for today's valuable event.

Instabrag, another well-regarded horse, was highly impressive in a novice hurdle at Fairyhouse earlier this month and is considered a banker for the Cheltenham Festival.

Instabrag showed useful form on the flat for John Gosden and has adapted very smoothly to the jump. He should start as odds on for the first Choice Novice Hurdle and looks to have an excellent chance. Cheltenham will also be on the mind of trainers with entries in the Gold Card Handicap Hurdle Qualifier run today. The John Mulhern-trained Miltownfield has not run for nearly seven weeks but is reported to be in good order and may be the answer to an especially tricky contest for punters.

Daniels set up a possible clash with Imperial Call, the Cheltenham Gold Cup winner, with an impressive victory in the Denary Gold Medal Chase at Leopardstown yesterday. The Tom Foley-trained gelding stormed home six lengths clear of British challenger Land Ajar with his jockey, Tommy Treacy, punching the air in delight well before the line.

"He has proved a lot of people wrong," Foley said after Daniels had made his only slight mistake at the fourth fence in the two-mile-one-furlong contest. "He learnt from his fall at Punchestown and will continue to learn. He will go for every race available to him and distance won't be a worry."

One of Daniels' targets is the Hennessy Gold Cup at Leopardstown on February 2 in which he could meet Imperial Call. But Foley has yet to decide which race Daniels will contest at the Cheltenham Festival.

LEOPARDSTOWN

THUNDERER
12.25 Spirit Dancer, 12.55 Tell The Nipper, 1.25 Klairon Davis, 2.00 Instabrag, 2.35 New Co, 3.10 Humble, 3.40 Be My Pleasure.

GOING: YIELDING

12.25 TOTE ACCOUNT HURDLE

- (£4,170; 2m) (18 runners)
- | | | | | |
|----|------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 11-0 | C Laps |
| 2 | 2425 | TELL THE NIPPER | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | R Dorey |
| 3 | 3043 | KLAIRON DAVIS | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 4 | 2405 | INSTABRAG | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 5 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 6 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 7 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 8 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 9 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 10 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 11 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 12 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 13 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 14 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 15 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 16 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 17 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 18 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |

12.55 CHELTENHAM GOLD CARD

- (£5,480; 3m) (15)
- | | | | | |
|----|------|---------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 525 | KLAIRON DAVIS | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 11-0 | R Dorey |
| 2 | 2159 | INSTABRAG | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 3 | 3043 | KLAIRON DAVIS | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 4 | 2405 | INSTABRAG | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 5 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 6 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 7 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 8 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 9 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 10 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 11 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 12 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 13 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 14 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 15 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |

1.25 MCCAIN HANDICAP CHASE

- (£5,850; 2m) (5)
- | | | | | |
|---|------|---------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 412 | KLAIRON DAVIS | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 11-0 | R Dorey |
| 2 | 2159 | INSTABRAG | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 3 | 3043 | KLAIRON DAVIS | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 4 | 2405 | INSTABRAG | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 5 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |

2.00 1ST CHOICE NOVICE HURDLE

- (£9,675; 2m) (6)
- | | | | | |
|---|------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 2 | 2425 | TELL THE NIPPER | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | R Dorey |
| 3 | 3043 | KLAIRON DAVIS | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 4 | 2405 | INSTABRAG | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 5 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 6 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |

2.35 PADDY POWER HANDICAP CHASE

- (£44,050; 3m) (17)
- | | | | | |
|----|------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 2 | 2425 | TELL THE NIPPER | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | R Dorey |
| 3 | 3043 | KLAIRON DAVIS | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 4 | 2405 | INSTABRAG | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 5 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 6 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 7 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 8 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 9 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 10 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 11 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 12 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 13 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 14 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 15 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 16 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 17 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |

3.10 ARBORVIEW GARDEN CENTRE MAIDEN

- (£3,082; 2m) (12)
- | | | | | |
|----|------|-----------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 464 | BUCHAR | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 11-0 | C Laps |
| 2 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 3 | 2425 | TELL THE NIPPER | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | R Dorey |
| 4 | 3043 | KLAIRON DAVIS | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 5 | 2405 | INSTABRAG | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 6 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 7 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 8 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 9 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 10 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 11 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 12 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |

3.40 LEOPARDSTOWN ANNUAL RACE

- (£3,082; 2m) (7)
- | | | | | |
|---|------|---------------|----------------------|-----------|
| 1 | 412 | KLAIRON DAVIS | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 11-0 | R Dorey |
| 2 | 2159 | INSTABRAG | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 3 | 3043 | KLAIRON DAVIS | 20 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 4 | 2405 | INSTABRAG | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | P Pridham |
| 5 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 6 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |
| 7 | 1034 | SPRIT DANCER | 27 (6) 6 M Laps 10-7 | C Laps |

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN
BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Last week I discussed suit-preference signals when you were giving your partner a ruff. This Refresher describes their use in No-Trump contracts. When you are knocking out the declarer's stoppers, you can often indicate where your entry is by the size of card you use. A high card indicates your entry is in a higher ranking suit, and vice versa.

As West you lead the jack of spades against 3 NT. Declarer plays the king from dummy. East takes the ace and returns the nine. How do you defend? Clearly you must overtake the nine, as if it is your partner's last spade declarer could shut out the suit by ducking if you play low. As your entry is in hearts rather than diamonds, you play the jack of spades. If declarer lets you hold the trick, you re-emphasise the message by clearing spades with the ten.

Now assume you had the ace of diamonds instead of the ace of hearts. This time you would play the ten of spades on the nine, and if that held continue with the two of

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE
CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Hastings preview

Britain's top all-play-all tournament starts at Hastings tomorrow with a field including top British grandmasters Michael Adams, Stuart Conquest and John Nunn, while the foreign opposition is fronted by grandmaster Bogdan Lalic. Here are a couple of recent wins by two of the likely favourites. Hastings runs until January 12 and for those readers who wish to obtain details of round times, in order to spectate the tournament office can be contacted on 01424 439222.

White: Stuart Conquest

Black: Robert Bellin
Donner Memorial 1996

King's Gambit

- | | | |
|----|------|---------------|
| 1 | a4 | e5 |
| 2 | f4 | exf4 |
| 3 | Nf3 | d6 |
| 4 | Bc4 | Nf6 |
| 5 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| 6 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| 7 | Nc3 | Be7 |
| 8 | d4 | Nb6 |
| 9 | Bc3 | Qb6 |
| 10 | Na2 | g5 |
| 11 | 0-0 | Qc4 |
| 12 | Rb1 | Qa5 |
| 13 | Rb2 | Nd7 |
| 14 | Bd2 | Qd8 |
| 15 | e5 | dxe5 |
| 16 | exd5 | Bx3 |
| 17 | exd6 | Bc3+ |
| 18 | Kh1 | Ne5 |
| 19 | Bf5 | Bh5 |
| 20 | 0-0 | 0-0 |
| 21 | Nd4 | Nxc4 |
| 22 | Rd7 | Black resigns |

WINNING MOVE

White to play. This position is from the game Pokrowski - Staruchin, USSR 1980. Here White found a clever way to bring his kingside initiative to a favourable conclusion. What did he play?

Auctioneer in



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A C Lloyd (Buildings) Ltd
ACM Shipping Ltd
ADAS
AG Europe (UK) Ltd
AJS Ventures
AKC International Ltd
AKC International Plc
Alcon Systems UK Ltd
AQA Equity & Law
Abbey National Benefit Consultants Ltd
Acco Instruments & Controls Ltd
Acco Europe/Procal
Acetofuel Group
Air Movement Design Ltd
Air Products
Allen Shovel (Asset Management) Ltd
Allis Stewart Partnership
Alexander Ethelst U W Ltd
Allco Associates
Alliance & Leicester/Village Bank
Allist Dunbar
Allist Dunbar (Wales) Group
Allist Dunbar (Yorkshire) Region
Allied Chemical Association (Head Office)
Allied Dunbar Assurance (Swindon)
Allison Financial Services
Alms & Young
Alpha Protection Eng (Presty) Ltd
Alps Wilkerson
Altus UK Ltd
Ameco PLC
Amoco (UK) Exploration Company
Amor Construction Ltd
Apollo Media (UK) Limited
Apollon Video Film Hire Ltd
Applix Group plc
Applied Communications Inc Ltd
Aquas-Ges (Welsh & Pitting) Ltd
Architects
Archway Watermain & Co
Arthur Anderson
Ashdown Hurrely & Co
Ashtons Investment Services
Associated Lullule Ltd
Associated Nursing Services Plc
Associated Oilfield Services
Assurance Independent Tobacco Sp...
Astis Elektronik
Astra Rent A Car
Aston Engineering Services
Avon Insurance
AVS (Auto Product) Ltd
B S
B T The Park Hospital
B Chemicals
B D UK Ltd
B E B Contractors Group Limited
B GSCF Plc Colours & Specialities Ltd
BGSD Stay Heywood
B I
B J (UK) Ltd
B K Barbury
Baig Hong
Bank of Montreal
Banque Paribas
Barclaycard
Barclays Bank
Barclays Bank / Barclays Hyde
Barclays Bank South East Region
Barclays Life Assurance Co Ltd
Barclays Vehicle Management Services
Barclays Vehicle Communications Ltd
Basins Taylors Limited
Beane Weston
Beaver Plc
Bedfordshire Stanley's
Deacons Business Interiors
Bell & Watson (UK) Plc
Belmont Linoleum & Co Limited
Bentley Limited
Benyon McGarvey Henderson
Benson Leighton
Bergham Manufacturing Jewellers Ltd
Birmingham Midland Mortgage Services
Blackburn Vasez UK Ltd
Blue Circle Industries Plc
Boone Wright Associates Ltd
Boston Europe Ltd
Bovoster Business Forms
Bowring Marsh and McJannin Ltd
Braden's Office Supplies
Bradley Lomas Electrolux Limited
Bridgend Packaging
British Airports Maintenance Cardiff
British Airways Travel Shops Limited
British Midlands
British Medical Airways
Inter Pacific Group
British Steel Plc
Britvic Healthcare
Brooklands Glass Co. Ltd
Brown Shipley & Co Ltd
Brydon UK Ltd
Bryden Johnson & Co
Building & Property Facilities Management
Bunzl
Burns, Mears & Despard
Business Systems Group Ltd
Buzzards & Co
B Z Co Oxford
Butcher Centre Management (UK) Plc
C-C Group Limited
C-L-C Group Ltd
C-TL Ltd
EF Torquay
ESI CompuServe Services for Industry Ltd
Eaton Electrical Services Group Ltd
Electrosonic Systems Components Ltd
Elm Commercials Ltd
Emil (UK) Ltd
Emmett Building Materials
Empress Asset Finance Limited
Enervation Get Limited
Enterprise Franchises Group Plc
Entree & Plooming (Midlands)
Eschbachs Components
Essential Vacuum Ltd
Estimote Insurance Group
Charles Barrett Interiors
Harries Russell
Hartleys, Coyler & Co Ltd
Hawthorne Homes
Hathertonhouse Tilney
Hemel Hempstead Corporation (UK) Ltd
Imperial Manufacture and Refining Ltd

[illegible]

H.M. Customs & Excise - Investigation Division
H.S. Pigeonmancer Ltd
HSBC Global Ltd
Hudson Suddards
Hobson Price
Holifax Property Services
Holmes Landau
Homocoma Holdings Ltd
Homeville
Horve Shop Equipment Limited
Howard Agricultural Supplies
Howarth Financial Consultants
Howett Trust Company (International) Ltd
Hynes Express Service
Hynes Personnel
Hyvond
Hesby Electrical & Building Services
Henry Cooper Masters - Boston
Hewlett-Packard
Hewlett & Co Ltd
Hemington Dackle & Shaw
Hermitz Emaline & Co
Heron Devonian Ltd
Hodgsons
Holland & Sherry Ltd
Houghton Control Systems Ltd
Houston Finance Services Centre Ltd
Hugh James Solicitors
Huxley & Flaxton
Hymne Robertson Consulting Actuaries
Hyperflex International Hospital
IBC Group Plc
IBH Berkshire Independent Hospital
IBM Midlands Hospitals
ISH Greater Manchester
ISH Ireland Hospitals
ISH North Down Hospitals
C.I. Financial Services
C.I. (North)
IVECO Ford
J&L Ltd
Jan Scott & Company
Jamendall Frozen plc
Japan Tobacco Limited
JC Co
Johnson Sheffield Group Ltd
Joint Promotions Ltd
Integrated Engineering Projects
Intercontinental Europe Ltd
Interior PLC
International Precadium Exchange
International Pacific Group
International Freight Services
Morris & Son Ltd
Rothschild Assurance Plc
T. Thomas & Son Ltd
T. (UK) Limited
ET
EAT (Taylor Whitehead) Ltd
Edmonds Chartered Accountants
Energy Centric (Pty) Ltd
Ensigns & Co Corp
Ensigns Hearn & Co
Euro Drink & Company
Euro Fyle Limited
Evans & Stone Group
Evermore Securities & Co Ltd
Euro South & Partners Ltd
Johnston & Higgins
Johnstone-Henry Clark Ltd
Julien Hedge Bank
F. J. Resourcing Ltd
E.T. Electronics
Eurydygas Services Limited
Innovaya
Irvine Macleod Oil (UK)
Synthesis Valueus UK Ltd
Carac (UK) Ltd
Kerr
Kilde Graviner

Kingspan Building Products Ltd
Kinnear & Co Ltd
Kodak Ltd
Korner Tissue Group
Kusner M & G Offshore Ltd
L P Group Plc
La Manga Property Services
Laird Menzer
Lang Homes Ltd
Larson Paper Sales Ltd
Langford & Thomson
Larsen Engineering Limited
Lawrence Guthrie
Lawson Merdon Packaging
Leason Marston Star Ltd
Lee Bright
Lease Portfolio Management
Lee & Priestley Solicitors
Lee Gee
Library
Lincoln National
Lloyds Bank Plc Corporate Banking
Lyons Bank Group
Mackay General Insurance Company Ltd
London Bullion Market Association
Macquarie Finance Ltd
London Metal Exchange Golf Association
Lonatrade Travel Group
Lofholm
Lombard Lombard Motoring Limited
Lone Summit Plc
Lorill White Therman
Lowndes Construction Ltd
Loyn Chubb
M D Foods International (UK) Ltd
M I O B
M J Gibson Group Plc
M M L Ltd
M V A
MTA Group PLC
Netherlands Union - Chartered Accountants
Nace & Jones Guntery Kershaw
Macgregor Blair & Co Ltd
Nacel Security Group Ltd
Main Trust & Bus UK Ltd
Management Science Ltd
Manchester Publicity Association
Marshall Motorbikes Ltd
Market Harborough Building Society
Marsh & Spencer
Maslin & McLennan Global Binding Ltd
Mass International Organization Plc
Maynard Clive Service Sports Arts
McAlister
McCormick (UK) Plc
McDonnell Marine Construction Ltd
McDougall Flora
McDonald Wallace
McGrogger Murphy Associates
McKenzie, A Co
McMichael Corporation
Measure - BSA Ltd
Meese-Person Investments
Metals-Person Investments (UK) Ltd
Micrograph Plc
Mercury Teles (Uk) Ltd
Mercury Communications Ltd
Messiah Business Support Plc
Messiah London Branch
Microsoft Limited
Midland Shires Farmers Ltd
Miller Associates Ltd
Ogilvy & Mathey Oil City Ltd
Mogler & Spandau (Societe)
Morrisons & Bellinell Hospital N-HB Trust
Morsecar Plc
Mortenson Ltd
Morgentha Thermal Chemical Ltd

[illegible]

Dawson Lee Ltd
Stratford Laines
Sherratt & Sherratt (Building Supplies) Ltd
Sherratt & Co Limited
Shell UK Exploration & Production
Shepherd Systems Ltd
Shimizu Leasing Plc
Short Bros Plc
Shorrock Nicolair Information Systems Ltd
Sigsbee Ltd
Signpost Mail Limitied
Singer & Friedlander (Tele of Mary) Ltd
Sir James & Robert Products Ltd
Slipstream Building Society
Smith & Williamson
Smith Barry...
Smiths General
Smiths Personal Plc
Somford
Southern Crane Hire
Spacotex Systems Ltd
Standard Life Assurance Company
Star Microflex UK Limited
Steel Plant Products
Stewart & Stevenson (UK) Ltd.
Stone-Jones Inc
Strategic Management Solutions
Stratton Ltd Windows
Summers & Furness
Sun Alliance - Personal Life Division
Sun Electric UK Ltd
Sunbelt Services
Swain Chamber of Commerce
Sweet National Leasing Limited
Swift Leisure Corporation
Systems Union Ltd
T S B Bank Plc
T&A Armstrong & Partners
TMD (UK) Ltd Components Division
TOD Crest
Tols Financial Products
Total Express Worldwide
Telford International
Totalelec Plc
Townbridge Plc
Taylor Johnson Garrett
Taylor Nelson AGB
Taylor Norton Annual Charity Golf Day
Templeton Ltd
Thames Water Plc
Thames Water Consulting Plc
The Arisley Glass Consulting Group
The Associated Builders Group
The British Land Company Plc
The British Precast Concrete Federation
The Chemical Engineering Council
The Chelsea Partnership Ltd
The Classic Merchant Association
The Children's Appeal
The Citizens Advice Bureau
The Electrical Contractors Assn (EECA)
The J H Rotherfield Partnership
The Lloyd Group
The London City Airport Corporation Plc
The Lodge Company
The London Cleaning House Limited
The Macmillan Communications Business
The Mayflower Housing Project
The Miller Insurance Group Limited
The National Gift Company Plc
The National Oil Central Sales Negotiation
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Trade Indemnity Plc
Trade Perfection
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Tudor & Tokyo Foreign International
Turner & Townsend
Turner & Co (Glasgow) Ltd
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UDT Ltd
Unifonex U.K.
Union Chemical Ltd
Unilever Ltd
Unileys Ltd
United Kingdom
Union Limited
Upnor Ltd
URM Communications
Vanner Shipley & Co
Vermon Building Society
Videokon Corporation
Viridis Solicitors
WDR & RT Tappert
W & F Barnes W.S.
Waters Ltd
WT Jennings
Walker Smith & Willy
Walman Limited
Walton Roofcover Ltd
Watkinson Ltd
Waterway Partners
Webster Wilson Ltd
Weinagosa Plc
Westminster Green & Smith
Westons (Westcot) Ltd
Wheddie Bell
Wier Engineering Services
Whitehead Properties
Whitham Beer Company
Whitbread Plc
White Young
Whiteley & Mackay
Willis Corron
Willis Corron Management (Ints of Men)
Williamsons Fruit Ltd
Winchester White Limited
Wooden Group Ltd
Woodward Spoon Society
Woodward Spoon Society (Barry/Guildford)
Woodward Spoon Society - Chichester Region
Woodward Spoon Society Midland
Woodward Spoon Society Scotland
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The Times Friday, June 19, 1964



POP 1

It has been a great year for those sexy crusaders of Thatcherism, the Spice Girls...



POP 2

...and Oasis continued to dominate the headlines for all sorts of reasons...

THE TIMES ARTS



POP 3

...but the artist formerly believed to be a megastar bombed out of sight in 1996...



POP 4

...and Sting was among the other big names who found the pickings slim this year

POP: David Sinclair looks back on 1996 as the year in which tired old names finally rolled out of sight

Spicy climax to a year of big losers

Barely had the bells finished ringing in the new year than Britpop was declared dead. Oasis were far too big for such labels, and Damon Albarn, we subsequently learnt, had written and sung those chirpy, laddish songs while suffering from depression. It was time to get serious.

But it was not until much later in 1996 that the extent of Britpop's impact was fully revealed. For this was the year that the new wave of bands finally achieved what punk had set out to do 20 years ago. The idea that in 1976 Johnny Rotten and Co might actually pose a threat to the dominant market position of rock's old guard and establish a new pecking order may seem laughable in retrospect, even if it was taken seriously then. But in 1996 that is exactly what the so-called Britpop bands actually did. Or so it seemed.

The groundwork had been done in 1995. In fact, the key players in the revolution did little this year. There were no new albums from Oasis, Blur, Pulp, Supersound, Black Grape or Paul Weller, and it was left to the Manic Street Preachers to sweep the awards with their phoenix-from-the-ashes album *Everything Must Go*.

But the year was notable as much for what did not happen as for what did. For no apparent reason, a string of albums by previously gilt-edged superstars, including Phil Collins, R.E.M., the Cure and Sting all failed significantly to sell what was expected.

The most startling turnaround was in the fortunes of Prince. Winner of the International Male Artist Award at the Brits in February, he alienated industry and fans with his desultory "contractual obligation" album *Chaos And Disorder* which sold fewer than 40,000 copies in Britain, and then unleashed a triple CD, *Emancipation*, that sank like a stone.

The sound of established idols tottering reverberated well beyond the charts. The hubris of Michael Jackson brought forth nemesis in the shape of Jarvis Cocker, a laughable prank at the Brits turned into a PR nightmare which has done more lasting damage to Jacko's career in this country than all the lurid allegations of personal eccentricities put together.

Paul McCartney, standing shoulder to shoulder with Status Quo and Iron Maiden, stooped to writing an article in the *Daily Mirror* complaining that the Beatles' "new" single, *Real Love*, was not being played enough on Radio 1. He was lucky it got played at all.

Radio 1 had completed the most radical overhaul in its musical policy since the station began broadcasting in 1967, and while you did not have to be a young, swashbuckling new act to get on its playlists, it certainly helped. Chris Evans, whose flagship *Breakfast Show* and Channel 4 TV show, *TFI Friday*, offered a boisterous mixture of the brilliant, the boorish and the bizarre, became one of the most influential people in pop. When he starred schmoozing Sharleen Spiteri of Glaswegian has-beens Texas, or championing Chris Rea's eccentric film soundtrack, *La Passione*, you could almost hear



How could we ever think of parting? Oasis celebrate that brotherly feeling at Knebworth in August. (*What's The Story*) *Morning Glory?*, though released last year, continued to sell in huge numbers

the sound of record company promotion budgets expanding to capitalise on the opportunity his endorsement represented.

Oasis staged a string of massive concerts at Knebworth, Loch Lomond and Maine Road, and while records by the older superstars languished in the lower reaches of the chart, their album (*What's The Story*) *Morning Glory?* achieved certified sales of 3,600,000 in the UK, equalling Simply Red's *Life and Dire Straits' Brothers in Arms* as the biggest-selling album ever released in the UK by a British act.

Pulp won the Mercury Music Prize. And albums by newly successful acts including Kula Shaker, Ocean Colour Scene and the soulful Lighthouse Family raced to single, double and triple-platinum sales respectively.

Britpop has succeeded where punk failed essentially by stealing the clothes of the old guard. Rather like new Labour portraying itself as the party of low taxation and sound economic management, the new bands have, generally speaking, got where they are by abandoning any notion of being a "radical alternative". Ash, Cast, the Bluetones, the Lightning Seeds, Space, Suede, the Boo Radleys, Skunk Anansie, the Longpigs: they are the mainstream now.

The old-timers had not entirely given up, however. The Sex Pistols returned in front of 30,000 fans in Finsbury Park, which was a surprising success. And on a chilly June day in Hyde Park, The Who, Clapton and Dylan attracted 150,000 for a musical nostalgia-thron. The only performer under the

age of 50 was Alanis Morissette, 22, who played fourth on the bill even though she sold more records in 1996 than the others combined.

But where were the radical new ideas coming from? Tricky made two albums, *Nearly God* and *Pre-Millennium Tension*, that were virtually unlistenable, and there

were a host of self-consciously weird, trip-hop albums with titles like *Let No One Live Rent Free In Your Head*, that were too artfully contrived to make much of an impression beyond the pages of the music press. Beck's much-fancied album *Odelay* was a similarly inscrutable experience.

But the really exciting developments came from a disparate collection of dance acts that are increasingly being bracketed together under the banner "new electronica". Led by the Prodigy, who are going to be the key act of 1997, the "movement" includes artists such as Underworld, the Chemical Brothers, Orbital, DJ Shadow and Faithless. All of them have thrived in the charts as well as on the dance floor and are now becoming increasingly accessible.

The phenomenon of 1996, though, was surely the Spice Girls: a 1.5 million-selling debut album, three chart-topping singles, including the Christmas No 1, and similar success breaking out all over the world, with the one exception (so far) of America. Their take on the pure pop formula was witty,

aspirational and sexy in a way that made the equivalent boy bands, especially Boyzone, seem dull beyond belief. Unsurprisingly, then, the news that they considered themselves children of the Thatcher revolution became the biggest pop story since Oasis threatened to split up for a couple of days.

Pop musicians may regularly own up to acts of extravagant depravity without anyone turning a hair, and certain rap stars have been tried in the American courts this year on charges ranging from gang-rap to murder without attracting a murmur of condemnation from the music press. But in the wacky world of pop, expressing support for the Tories remains the ultimate taboo. If the Spice Girls can carry that off, they can get away with anything.

TOP SELLING ALBUMS OF 1996	
1 Jagged Little Pill	Alanis Morissette (Maverick)
2 (What's The Story) Morning Glory?	Oasis (Creation)
3 Falling Into You	Celine Dion (Epic)
4 Spice	Spice Girls (Virgin)
5 Older	George Michael (Virgin)
6 The Score	Fugees (Columbia)
7 Take Two	Robson and Jerome (RCA)
8 Greatest Hits	Take That (RCA)
9 Mosley Shoals	Ocean Colour Scene (MCA)
10 Greatest Hits	Simply Red (East West)

Royal Academy of Arts

LIVING BRIDGES

Over 115,000 have seen Living Bridges and designs for a new Thames Bridge. Exhibition extended until 5 January 1997

'Superb models of bridges, real and fantastic' Time Out

'A stunning exhibition' Sunday Times

'Living Bridges' also includes the Thames Water Habitable Bridge Competition. Seven architects exhibit their designs for a new inhabited Thames crossing.

Living Bridges is supported by the Corporation of London and the Générale des Eaux Group in association with The Independent. The exhibition was realised with the Centre Georges Pompidou, (MNHM-CCB). Living Bridges includes the Thames Water Habitable Bridge Competition.

Welcome to the global ceilidh

THE CHIEFTAINS
Santiago (BMG 09026-68602-2)
WE'RE all Irish now. Ry Cooder, Linda Ronstadt and Los Lobos join Paddy Moloney and the boys as they journey to Galicia in northern Spain, "the world's most undiscovered Celtic country". The result is a fascinating blend of traditional Irish and Hispanic, with Carlos Nunez on the Galician bagpipes outstanding. There is a Mexican mariachi tune and a 30-strong Cuban choir and it only requires a small stretch of the imagination to hear the common thread. The Chieftains could so easily rest on their laurels after all these years. Instead they are still extending the boundaries of Irish music. Traditional, yes, stale, never.

CHEIKH LO
No La Thass (World Circuit WCD-046)
THE world music album of the year, according to many judges. From Senegal and produced by Youssou N'Dour, Cheikh Lo has a magical voice and writes lilting songs about the world around him. The sound is basically acoustic but ripples with both West African and Cuban rhythms. Warm and intimate with a spiritual quality, the album is astonishingly assured for a debut and is already on the way to making Lo one of the biggest names in African music. The effect on first hearing is positively spine-tingling - and it gets better with every play.

MITRA
New Hope for the Dead (JVC 9006-2)
AN INTRIGUING but not always satisfactory "trans-global fusion", with elements of Chinese opera, Persian ballads, Balinese gamelan, Indian film music and much else. It is the imaginative brainchild of composer Martin Gordon, and the cast-of-thousands blend is at its best exciting, if impossible to define - pop and dance, techno and traditional sounds swirling wildly together. Full marks for bravery but the result is overambitious: it is as if the album was recorded for one of those time capsules launched into space, attempting to make a composite of the music of the entire globe in 60 minutes. Unsuspecting aliens will probably love it.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Rock On rocks off

Camden's most famous record shop is about to close its doors

There might not seem to be an obvious connection between Camden Town becoming the most popular British tourist attraction of 1996 and Rock On, a tiny run-down record store beside the Tube station. But the small shop was one of the reasons why people started coming to the area in the first place.

Rock On was opened in August 1975 by Ted Carroll, a genial Irishman who had co-managed Thin Lizzy, and his partner, Barry Appleby. The shop's collection of blues, soul, R&B, rockabilly, reggae and ska immediately made it a Mecca for serious record collectors and it was also one of the few places to cater for the burgeoning punk scene.

By the end of 1975, Carroll and fellow Irishman Roger Armstrong had used a small room above the shop to start Chiswick Records, one of the first independent record labels, whose roster included the Damned and Motorhead and lesser known bands fronted by such future stars as Joe Strummer, Billy Bragg and Jim Kerr.

The presence of Chiswick Records and its close proximity to Camden Town Tube station made Rock On

a natural hang-out for musicians, most notably the Clash, who lived in a dilapidated warehouse near by and would go into the shop to keep warm. Madness, Paul Weller, Elvis Costello, the Pogues, Van Morrison and Robert Plant were also Rock On regulars, and Bob Dylan bought records there while he was filming *Hearts of Fire* in the nearby Electric Ballroom in 1986.

In recent years, Rock On has attracted the more discerning among the new breed of Camden pop stars. Jarvis Cocker pops in, Noel Gallagher can be found browsing among the soul records, and Bobby Gillespie frequently calls into the shop to chat or play the staff tracks from the forthcoming Primal Scream album.

Most of the regulars automatically assume that Rock On is the north London record store on which Nick

Hornby based his best selling novel *High Fidelity*. Even though Hornby insists that his book was not based on any place in particular, there are parallels between Rock On and his fictitious Championship Vinyl.

"Hornby's book could easily be about Rock On," says Carroll. "He managed to suss out the perversity of record collectors and just how far they will go to obtain certain discs."

It is ironic that Rock On, which kick-started the whole idea of popstars hanging out in Camden, should become a victim of the area's popularity. A massive increase in rent precipitated a joint decision between Carroll and the shop's manager, Paul Cwynarski, to call it a day - Rock On will close its doors on New Year's Eve.

It is not yet known what will open in its place, but it is unlikely to fill the gap left by one of the world's best-known record shops. As Madness's Suggs says: "Rock On closing? That's the end, isn't it? Full stop."

ANN SCANLON
Rock On is at 3 Kenish Town Road, London NW1. It is open between 11am and 6pm until Tuesday

European aid: a case of spending well but none too wisely

There is a document on sale which, for a mere 65 ecu (£49), could turn Kenneth Clarke into a card-carrying member of the Referendum Party. It is the annual report of the Court of Auditors, the independent body charged with detecting fraud in the European Commission and ensuring that it spends its money wisely. Its conclusions — the Commission must do better.

The 368-page report contains a litany of loose controls, misdirected payments and plain old simple fraud. For instance, what would you make of the grant given for a rural tourism project in Tordehumos in northern Spain. Around £20,000 was given to a local businessman for turning a house into a hotel aimed at sporting customers. Only after this hotel failed to open did the EC auditors discover that it was really a weekend retreat for the owner.

Yet the same man was given a grant of almost £30,000 for "exploitation and

marketing of local agricultural and forestry products".

He said that he was going to breed partridges for hunting and would set up apartments for the hunters. When the men from the EC turned up they found the building had been let to a chicken farmer. They are now asking for their money back.

The drolly written report is packed with similar instances and wry observations about EC money being misdirected and not achieving its aims. Take the £126,000 spent on trying to cut down liquid manure pollution in Germany's Rhineland. The project was described as "neither an incentive nor a spur to innovation" in spite of being awarded with just those objectives in mind.

Or how officials in Cantabria, a region of Spain, were failing to pay out EC grants for up to 18 months. Or the grant to pay for teachers in the newly autonomous Palestine that took so long

Jason Nissé discovers a damning report by auditors showing widespread fraud and incompetence infecting some EC projects

to be paid that the local government had already hired the teachers and given them six months' salary before the money came through.

Or the £4.3 million loss resulting from lax control of subsidies paid for rice exports to the island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean, which has a population of 643,000.

Or what about the inquiry into the Danish feta cheese industry. It found that in the five years to December 1994, £360 million of subsidies were paid to promote exports of just £424 million, a decent proportion of which went to Iran.

Or the aid programme for "non-

member Mediterranean countries" that ended up with the officials charged with distributing the funds giving £1 million to themselves.

Or the biggest flop of all, the attempt to promote high-definition television (HDTV). The EC decided it would try to promote the new format by encouraging TV producers to make programmes for it. The problems with this "Vision 1250" initiative included:

□ the Dutch producer who never made any programmes in spite of being awarded £96,000 in grants;

□ the Spanish company that was given

capital of just £4,500. After the first £530,000 was paid, the inspectors watched the shows and found the picture quality was not up to scratch. They asked for £300,000 back. The report does not record if the refund was made;

□ the programme maker (whose country of origin was not mentioned) who received a grant in spite of not having any equipment to make the programmes.

And, in conclusion, the auditors found that having spent £172 million to pay for 51,703 hours of broadcasting and 17,036 hours of programming, the number of television sets in Europe that could take this output was fewer than 1 in 100, and the only people to benefit were Korean and Japanese manufacturers of HDTV sets as these were the main ones on sale.

But the point that is most likely to make the blood boil is the small paragraph on page 215. It notes that in an audit of all the projects for research and technological development it found that

contracts worth £130 billion, or an astounding 28 per cent of the budget, displayed irregularities. In other words, almost a quarter of all the payments were made to questionable projects.

However, there is a bright side. Auditing the books of the EC's headquarters in Brussels, the auditors found only £5.3 million of payments unaccounted for and £10 million of missing equipment. The report decided to concentrate on the building's £120 million of computer equipment and concluded, world-wearyly, that: "In this case the findings are positive: the existence of these items can be verified, although their value has still to be clarified and the existence of wrong amounts is still to be ruled out."

In other words, the EC owns the computers it actually paid for. But it does not know if they are worth what they cost — so that is all right then.

Airbus ready to resolve split over management

By OLIVER AUGUST

A SPLIT involving Airbus partner companies is expected to be resolved at a supervisory board meeting on January 3, when the four-nation consortium will decide whether management should be given direct responsibility for production facilities.

British Aerospace and Daimler Benz want to hand control over Airbus's manu-

facturing plants to the consortium's managers.

But Aerospatiale, the French partner, has resisted such a move because of fears that it would be weakened by the loss of control over the assembly lines. Currently, the individual partner companies have control over their slice of the production process.

Airbus is to be turned into a separate company in 1999.

Aerospatiale and Dasa both have a 37.9 per cent stake, while British Aerospace owns 20 per cent and Casa of Spain 4.2 per cent.

The split over factory control was revealed this month and has evolved from differences in business philosophies on the supervisory board. The French fear that Airbus's own management is not experienced enough to take control of the plants. The British and German partners believe that while French fears may be justified, Airbus would face even greater dangers if it was to shy away from swift reorganisation.

To compete with Boeing, which is set to merge with McDonnell Douglas, Airbus has to spend more on the development of a new 600-seat superjumbo. But banks have indicated that funding will be available for such a project only if Airbus can transform itself into a single company. This, in turn, will enable Airbus to reduce its costs and to sharpen up its decision-making process.



Hot shot: Chris Wright scored with an £81,000 performance-related bonus in spite of heavy losses suffered by Chrysalis

Chrysalis rewards Wright despite losses

By ERIC REGULY

CHRIS WRIGHT, the chairman and majority owner of Chrysalis, was given a performance-related bonus of £81,000 last year, even though the music and entertainment group reported deep losses.

Mr Wright had a base

salary of £511,000 in the year to August 31, up from £500,000. The performance element of his pay fell from £100,000 to £81,000, but the decline did not reflect the bottom-line financial results.

Chrysalis reported a pre-tax

loss of £5.4 million in 1995-96 against a profit of £1 million in the previous year. Operating losses, however, were 46 per cent lower at £5.8 million.

Since 1994, Mr Wright has collected an additional

£425,000 for signing a new five-year service agreement, and £350,000 under a long-term incentive scheme.

Chrysalis's businesses include music publishing, the Heart and Galaxy radio stations and the Sheffield Sharks professional basketball team.

Banks were a bad bet, survey says

By JON ASHORTH

EUROPEAN banks have proved a dismal bet for investors over the past ten years, a Price Waterhouse study has found. Shareholders would have been better off investing in a portfolio that reflected the local market index but excluded the banking sector. The exception is the UK, where banks such as HSBC and Lloyds TSB have set the pace in delivering value.

Deutsche Bank and Banque Nationale de Paris have produced some of the worst returns for shareholders, according to Price Waterhouse. UK retail banks outperformed the market average strongly, as did banks in Belgium and The Netherlands, but the record across Europe as a whole is abysmal. Germany, Switzerland, France and Denmark are some of the worst performers.

Guy Madewell, a senior Price Waterhouse partner, said banks needed to consider shareholder value at every level. Banking in the UK has grown more efficient since the recession. Innovators include Lloyds TSB, where emphasis is placed on whether a particular action will generate positive cash flows. "Managing for cash" makes for more efficient decisions and generates more business, although "managing for profit" is often the norm.

Threat to Eurofighter

OUR BUSINESS STAFF

THE Eurofighter is facing a serious threat from Lockheed Martin, the American defence group which has completed the assembly of the first F-22 fighter jet.

British Aerospace, which expects substantial profits from Eurofighter exports, will encounter stiff competition because the US Government is expected to allow Lockheed to market the F-22 internationally. Defence in-

siders believe that countries like Korea and Israel are the primary F-22 export targets. But Britain and Germany have also expressed interest.

BAe has acknowledged that the F-22 will be a superior aircraft. BAe has been marketing the Eurofighter on the basis that it is cheaper. But new estimates show that BAe may be significantly overestimating the price difference.

Ailing computer giant pins hopes on Jobs, says Richard Thomson

Apple's NeXT vital bite at success

Apple Computers' decision to bring back Steve Jobs, one of the legendary figures of the personal computer industry, 20 years after he founded the company is likely to be its last chance to turn itself around.

At \$400 million, the struggling computer manufacturer is paying a stiff price for NeXT, Mr Jobs's software company, and for the advice of Mr Jobs himself, who will become a part-time consultant to Gilbert Amelio, Apple's chairman. The aim is to develop NeXT's software, NeXTStep, into a new generation of Apple operating software, a move which would help to restore the company's reputation for innovation and prop up its flagging share of the computer market.

Apple has been trying to buy a software company since it scrapped its Copeland project to develop new software earlier this year, having spent \$500 million on its development. Copeland was scheduled to have been launched in 1997.

Until a few weeks ago Apple was in talks to take over Be, a software company said to have a more sophisticated modern product than NeXT. Mr

Amelio said the owners of Be, Jean-Louis Gassée and David Marquardt, demanded too high a price. The NeXT deal was welcomed by most Wall Street analysts, who were encouraged that Mr Jobs, 41, would be helping Apple. "It's reassuring to have Jobs back on board," said one analyst, "but Apple is running out of time and can't afford to flop with this one."

The company's market



Jobs: part-time consultant

share has plummeted over the last 18 months, from nearly 10 per cent to about 5 per cent, and its shares have fallen by half to about \$22 because of management turmoil, unpopular products and strong competition from Microsoft's Windows 95 software.

Most importantly, Apple needs a new operating system that will persuade other software programmers in the industry to write programmes for Apple computers. One of the company's biggest problems is that there are fewer and fewer programmes available for Apple users compared to the number available for other PCs.

NeXT's software was regarded as elegant and fast when it was introduced eight years ago, but some programmers say it has lost its edge as competitors caught up. It will now attempt to update NeXTStep and blend it with some parts of Copeland and existing Apple software to produce a fast, innovative system.

Ellen Hancock, head of technology at Apple, said that it would be "easy" to adapt NeXTStep in crucial ways to push it ahead of competing systems when Apple launches

the new programme at the end of 1997. The deal is a coup for Mr Jobs, who only a few months ago said that Apple was dead. He set up NeXT after he was ousted from Apple in 1985 in a bitter power struggle with John Sculley, the executive he brought in to boost Apple's mass market sales. Trying to repeat Apple success, Mr Jobs launched NeXT eight years ago as a combined hardware and software system, packaged in a sleek-looking black shell. It never took off and the company shrank to being a niche software developer.

Mr Jobs, meanwhile, turned his attention to Pixar, his computer animation company, which made the film Toy Story, and tried without success to sell NeXT. Talks with Apple began early in November, when NeXT executives heard that Apple was having trouble clinching a deal with Be. Over the following weeks Mr Jobs persuaded Apple that NeXT was a good buy, although the deciding factor appears to have been that he and Mr Amelio found they worked well together.

Small firms fight change to labour law

SMALL FIRMS have rejected government plans to exempt them from unfair dismissal legislation, according to a survey (Alasdair Murray writes). The British Chambers of Commerce survey found that 83 per cent of small businesses believe that the current two-year limit for employees bringing a claim for unfair dismissal is fair.

Dr Ian Peters, deputy director-general of the BCC, said: "The creation of a two-tier system of employment protection would be undesirable and counter-productive." The BCC added that the Government should be concentrating on improving third party arbitration and weeding out unreasonable claims within the existing law.

Answers from page 29

JEHOASHAPHAT
(c) The fourth king of Judah, c.873-849BC. His father Aza, who ruled for 40 years, had put an end to the strife between Judah and Israel, which had been going on since the founding of the two sister kingdoms by Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Jehoshaphat's reign in Judah covered roughly the same years as Ahab's in Israel.

ORADIAH
(a) Prophet, author of the shortest book in the OT and the obscurest. Like Habbakuk's his life spanned the Babylonian conquest of Judah, but his special feature is his venom against the Edomites. Since they lived east of the Jordan, the Edomites were perilously exposed to the power of Babylon and forced to submit to it. For Oradiah this was treason, and he described with virulent enthusiasm their coming slaughter.

AMRAPHEL
(c) King of Shinar (Sumeria). Together with three other kings from the east, Amraphel made war on five kings from around the Dead Sea. Amraphel then defeated the kings from the east. The identification of Amraphel with the great Babylonian lawgiver Hammurabi, once generally accepted, creates serious chronological difficulties, since Hammurabi flourished c.2350BC, at least 500 years before Abraham.

BAANAH
(b) A murderous thug. A servant of king Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, whom he murdered in hope and expectation of a reward from the rising man, David. However, the young man on the rise ordered instead that he be executed, along with his fellow ruffian, Rechab (not the tentmaker).

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1 Qh5 and if 1... Qxd5 2 Nf3 2 g4 is crushing! 2 Rb5 Kf7 3 Rg5 checkmate.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.19	2.03
Austria Sch	19.27	17.77
Belgium Fr	56.48	52.18
Canada C	2.33	2.23
Cyprus C£	0.819	0.794
Denmark Kr	10.51	8.71
Finland Mk	8.34	7.69
France Fr	9.17	8.52
Germany M	2.75	2.54
Greece Dr	430	405
H Kong \$	13.59	12.59
Iceland Kr	120	100
Ireland Pt	1.38	1.32
Israel Shk	5.77	0.98
Italy Lira	2094	2509
Japan Yen	205.60	189.80
Malta M	0.643	0.598
Neth Gld	3.088	2.856
New Zealand \$	2.51	2.39
Norway Kr	11.37	10.57
Portugal Esc	272.50	254.08
S Africa R	8.42	7.92
Spain Pta	226.00	213.00
Sweden Kr	12.12	11.82
Switzerland Fr	2.36	2.18
Turkey Lira	165400	175400
USA \$	1.773	1.643

Notes for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates set at close of trading Tuesday.

97 WIN THE PRIZE OF YOUR DREAMS

An E-type Jaguar or £10,000, see Style

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

'Baring' up in Changi

HAPPY new year, Nick Leeson. Away from home for the second year running, the rogue trader is still safely ensconced in Singapore's Changi prison complex. Aiming for the earliest possible release from the six-and-a-half year prison sentence — provided that he behaves himself — Leeson has his sights set firmly on waving goodbye some time in the summer of 1999. Meanwhile, I hear that Leeson is keeping himself busy, employed in an "unspecified prison job". It doesn't sound as if the maverick is carrying a fortune — he gets around £3 a week, which all goes on food additives to supplement his rather basic diet.



Leeson: earning just £3 a week

Scottish lament

THE decision by Burnfield to cave in to the £57.7 million bid from Fairway was good news for David Simpson, the PR whose hapless task it was to defend Burnfield. Simpson, who doubles as managing director of Ludgate, was able to enjoy a family Christmas after missing a trip to see his mother in Scotland last weekend. "I don't think your mother can divorce you," Simpson tells me. "But if she could, I would be divorced."

Dolled up

THE Barbie doll craze is now moving into the fashion scene. Designers are about to hitch on to what they believe could be a new craze among little girls who have dreamt of looking like a Barbie doll. In Japan, Itochu Fashion Systems is planning to produce adult-sized Barbie styles — the undergarments, the dresses, and all the other fashion accessories which would fit any age group between 15 and 25. It is reckoned that they could be in the shops next year.

Shop talk

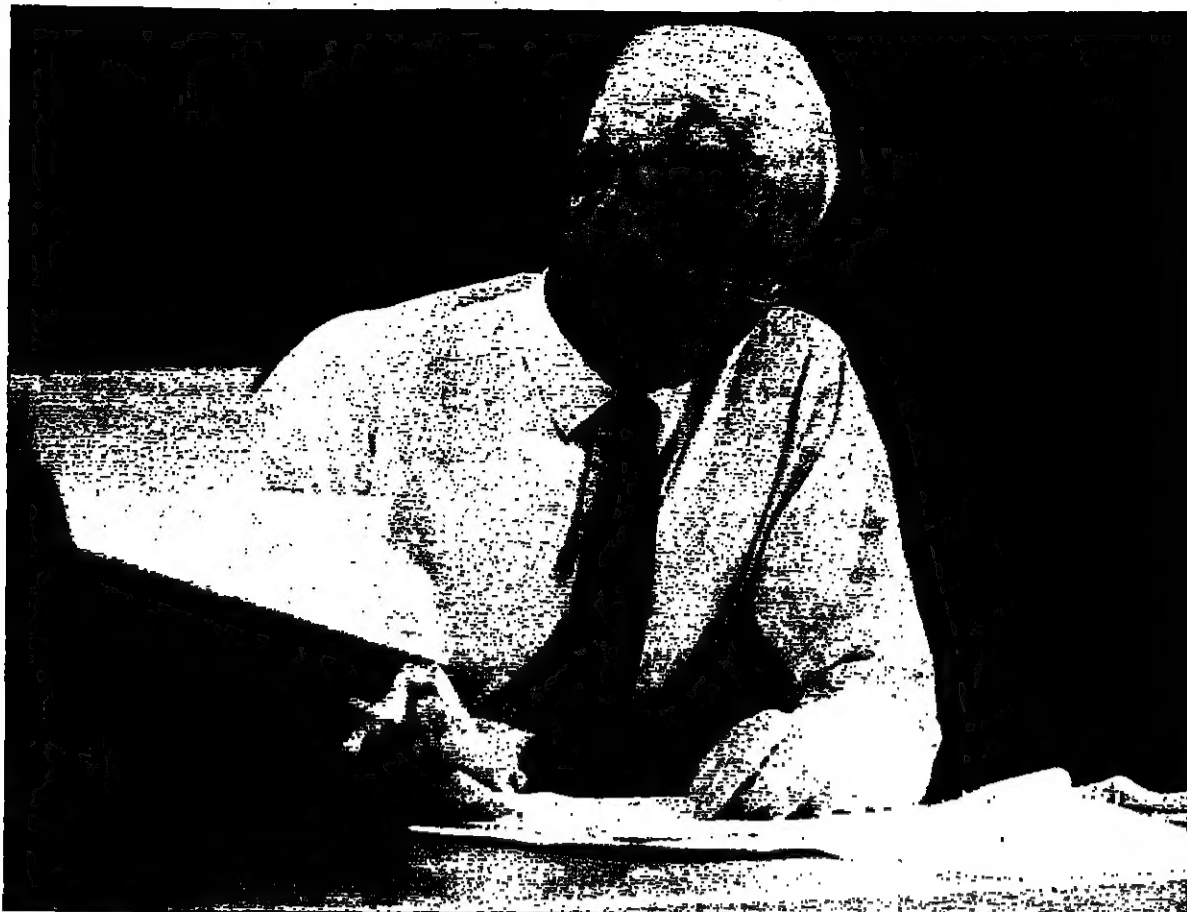
AN UPDATE after my story that Ann Robinson is to join the British Retail Council as its new director-general and Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover is handing over his crown as president at the end of November 1997 to Lord MacLaurin of Knighthorpe. Word has it that it will be "another grocer" who next year replaces bustling Mark Souhami as chairman.

Rhubarb cure

A HANGOVER cure from Selfridges for anyone who has over-indulged during the festive season. Jaded City revellers might want to venture in to Selfridges on their way to the office, where the in-store nurse is serving a drink of effervescent Vitamin C, or two Panadol with a dose of her secret rhubarb remedy.

JOHN PRESCOTT has delighted staff at Allied Dunbar, boasting that he holds a policy with the insurance company. How sweet of the deputy leader of the Labour Party to pass on the good news to Sandy Leitch, the chief executive of British American Financial Services, Allied Dunbar's parent company. Why this policy of disclosure?

MORAG PRESTON



Douglas Hurd, who was educated at Eton and Cambridge, is keen to play down his background, which included a stint in the Civil Service

NatWest's foreign minister keeps up his travels

Oliver August checks out the hectic working life of Douglas Hurd

Eton and Cambridge is the classic background for the City. Throw in the diplomatic service, thriller writing and a time crossing swords with Baroness Thatcher, and it can be seen why NatWest Markets was so keen to recruit Douglas Hurd when he left the Government 18 months ago.

Frustration drove him from Whitehall in June 1995. He no longer wanted to hold the fiddle for the Euro-sceptic Paganinis in his party. John Major had offered him the deputy prime ministership ahead of Michael Heseltine — a little known fact — but he declined. After 21 years in Parliament he wanted his freedom back. No more ministerial red boxes or red-nosed backbenchers foaming at the mouth.

The political animal divorced himself from the beast of burden. He still makes speeches and votes, but he does not have any paperwork and says triumphantly: "And the other thing is — you don't wake up with a worry on your mind." Starting out of his eighth-floor Bishopsgate window across north London, he loses himself in recollections. Memories of 16 years as a minister weigh heavily, if not on his mind, then at least in his language. "It was quite wearing, always working, fun, varied, I enjoyed... but now the pressure is off."

Nevertheless, his job description has changed little. He is still keeping his air miles account level with the Russian cosmonauts. "I love travel and I'm travelling almost as much as when I was Foreign Secretary. I enjoy meeting people in their own habitat. I went to ten countries in seven weeks during the autumn. I can't do very much while Parliament is sitting because, you know, there is a sort of precarious majority."

In London, Mr Hurd wakes at 7am and listens to Radio 4's Today programme. Then it off to the NatWest offices. "I run my life from here. I am usually here in the morning and go to Parliament in the afternoon." Most evenings end with a Westminster vote at 7pm or 10pm. He has yet to escape the crack of the party whip.

In an average week, Monday will see him address a conference outside London. He will meet French ministers in Paris on Tuesday, host a Whitehall lunch on Wednesday, go to Scotland on political and banking business on Thursday. On Friday and the weekend, he mingles with constituents in Oxfordshire.

Mr Hurd will relinquish his seat at the next election to devote himself exclusively to NatWest. He is a non-executive director on the main board. His meetings are, apparently, not unlike those he attended in Downing Street. But his main job is deputy chairman of NatWest Markets, the group's investment arm. His experience of dealing with foreign dignitaries serves him well.

He says: "There is a lot of welcoming people here. One of the terrible phrases in the City is: 'It's a people business. A big, profound discovery. If you have some Russian tycoon or minister or governor of the central bank, the first thing you have to do is get him talking, get him interested, get your points across. These are common skills.'"

Effortlessly, he makes banking sound like another branch of politics. That he's largely ignorant about finance seems to matter little to him or his employers. His age, however, he cannot deny. Starting a new career at 65 raises the obvious question of how long he will stay. Obvious it may be, but not to him. His friends apparently think that the switch from politics to finance has made him look younger.

He says so with a perfect politician's smile. The secret behind the receding wrinkles could indeed be linked to finance. Mr Hurd's own finances that is. He does little to dispute suggestions that he is paid more than £200,000 a year for a three-day week. "All the time I was in politics the rather small capital which I started with was gradually running down. It is nice that that is no longer so. Like many politicians you don't think about your own finance because you know if you do you are going to get depressed."

Taking up a company directorship after a distinguished career in politics

is a Hurd family tradition. Young Douglas followed his father to Westminster, who himself had followed his father. After a Commons career and a stint as agriculture correspondent *The Times* in the 1920s, Douglas's father became a director of several Falkland Island companies.

"He was a farmer, really, he was a tenant farmer in Wiltshire," Mr Hurd says. He omits that to the rest of the Empire he was known as Baron Hurd. After years of teasing about a silver spoon being part of his well-bred features, Hurd junior is keen to play down his background. Eton, Cambridge, the Cambridge Union presidency and a stint in the Civil Service hindered rather than helped his political career.

During his 1990 bid to succeed Margaret Thatcher he insisted that he was not a toff. But fellow Conservative MPs thought he appealed to estate owners rather than estate agents and voted for John Major.

The move to finance has not silenced public criticism. His NatWest appointment was preceded by the Nolan committee's exposé of sleaze in the Major Government. The Labour Party quickly portrayed his job change as driving a coach and horses through the spirit of the Nolan recommendations. He retorted with a list of explanations. He claims never to speak for NatWest, or on banking, in the Commons or says he is not employed as a consultant



or lobbyist. He fully complies with the new rules, he says.

The next public row came earlier this year. Mr Hurd was caught negotiating the privatisation of Serbia's phone company with President Milosevic, an old acquaintance. Of all EU foreign ministers, Mr Hurd had always seemed the least critical of Serbian genocide in Bosnia. Mr Hurd says: "It is in our interest that Serbia should be both politically and economically liberalised. I can't do anything about the political side. They are wrestling with that in the streets now. But on the economic side, if they want to move towards privatisation, it's in everyone's interest they should do that."

He still sounds like a House of Commons man who relishes gladiatorial debates. But he says he no longer feels a great thrill when he sits in the chamber. A new passion has entered his life — not banking but literature. "I have several years of writing books ahead of me," he says. He has finished the last sentence of a political novel called *A Shape of Eyes*. It is named after a poem by Thomas Hardy that describes the Titanic being built in Belfast while at the same time thousands of miles away the iceberg was taking shape. *A Shape of Eyes* deals with a Prime Minister recovering from a heart attack. He must decide whether to continue in office.

Mr Hurd says: "He resolves to go on and everything seems fine. The skies are clear, no particular crisis. And then about five things go wrong including in his personal life. The novel is about how things just pile up. I hope it conveys the feel of that."

Mr Hurd says that he has been careful not to caricature former colleagues. "I jugged all the characteristics up." But the heart attack plot inevitably leads to his old rival Heseltine. The two first crossed swords in 1974 when Mr Hurd beat the Deputy Prime Minister to a seat in Oxfordshire.

His passion for writing is really a return to an old hobby. *A Shape of Eyes* will be Mr Hurd's tenth thriller. He wrote the last one 15 years ago. "I scribble in ordinary WH Smith notebooks," he says. "It then gets typed so I can alter it on the screen. I need about an hour to get going, but if you are on a long plane journey, or half a day at home without interruption, it flows quite easily."

Before he started writing again he admits to having left lost. He had followed politics passionately since his university days. His departure from Whitehall had created a vacuum.

However, he was rescued by the City job offer. In the end his move amounted only to a change of props. The grand staircases of the Foreign Office were replaced by slick Bishopsgate lifts. Meet Douglas Hurd, NatWest's foreign minister.



The former Foreign Secretary with President Mandela of South Africa

Partnership begins to look shaky

Eileen McCabe says Irish success may undermine further economic progress

A due to the very different economic background to the Republic of Ireland's four national pay agreements from 1987 lies in their names.

The first was the "Programme for National Recovery", the one which ends on December 31 is the "Programme for Competitive-ness and Work", and the agreement which has just been negotiated is the forward-looking "Partnership 2000".

Earlier this month, the country's social partners — the Government, trade unions and employers' groups — made their way to Dublin Castle to fight their corner over who should get what, where and when. As they did so the OECD predicted that Ireland's remarkable GDP growth rates which reached 10.3 per cent in 1995, will continue at least 6 per cent until 1999.

Although all Irish people are proud of the international plaudits that have greeted the emergence of the "Celtic Tiger", some of the pay masters at the talks, must have hoped for a dilution of the "feel-good" factor which now permeates Irish life. Around the negotiating table, they discovered that in a time of plenty, everyone wants more.

After the obligatory late-night sessions, the stage-managed threats of walk-outs and the public cries of "no surrender", the new pay deal began to take shape. First the private sector pay agreement was sealed at 9.25 per cent over 39 months.

Then the public sector pay agreement was sealed at the same rate with certain provisos governing local pay bargaining and productivity deals.

Finally, the welfare groups, including the Irish National Organisation for the Unemployed, signed up when the Government agreed a £1525 million package to combat social exclusion and increase social welfare.

The 79-page Partnership 2000 deal also includes broad agreements on tax cuts and job creation over the next three years.

As in previous years the deal will now be put to a national ballot of workers. But unlike previous years, Ireland's workers in 1996 are not suffering from the fear of forced unemployment or emigration.

It was those twin terrors along with double-digit inflation which drove their representatives to the first pay talks that eventually led to the 1987 deal. The Republic's economy was in tatters; the national debt had ballooned from £17.9 billion in 1980 to almost £222 billion in 1986. Unemployment was running at 17 per cent, and, each year, more than 40,000

Irish people were forced to hit the emigration trail in search of work.

The national scare forced the unions to take a much longer-term view of their members' interests and the Government to adopt a much more rigorous approach to public finances. The result was the 1987 Programme for National Recovery, which laid down a series of measures to reduce public borrowing. Public sector jobs were shed, hospital wards were closed and those lucky enough to be in employment accepted meagre wage increases.

According to Terry Baker, an economist with the Economic and Social Research Institute, that agreement contributed to Ireland's almost miraculous recovery which today allows it to boast one of the fastest-growing economies in the OECD.

Ireland's debt-to-GDP ratio fell from 116 per cent in 1987 to 85 per cent in 1995 and according to the OECD's latest *Economic Outlook*, should drop to 71 per cent by 1998. The same report pegged Irish inflation at 2 per cent for the next two years.

The pay agreements have allowed Ireland's job creation agencies to highlight excellent industrial relations as well as low corporation tax rates when they trawl the world looking for corporate investors.

This in turn has helped to create more than 150,000 new jobs in Ireland in the five-year period to April 1996. Despite the jobs, the country's unemployment level remains at a stubbornly high rate of almost 12 per cent, mostly because emigration has been reduced to a trickle.

But Ireland's boom has one downside. Although the fear-induced wage and pub-

lic-spending restraint of the late 1980s has now been replaced by the challenge of satisfying the Maastricht criteria for membership of Europe's monetary union, there is a feeling that a Brussels directive doesn't carry the same weight with wage earners as impending economic disaster.

Even though the vast majority of workers are expected to accept their union leaders' recommendation to vote for Partnership 2000, there are already rumblings from some sectors that wage restraint has gone too far.

Recently the leaders of some nurses' unions were publicly humiliated when their members voted to reject a pay deal which they had recommended.

If that gap between union leaders and members spreads to other sectors, Partnership 2000 may be Ireland's last national pay deal.



The social partners met at Dublin Castle

informative:

With effect from 2 January 1997 the following interest rates will apply:

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Overdraft Rate	%pa	%EAR
Agreed overdraft for balances up to £10,000	9.00%	9.31%

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	From	To
All loan amounts	6.49% pa	6.74% pa

Equity Release Loan		
	From	To
All loan amounts	6.49% pa	6.74% pa

If a mortgage is held with First Direct or no other mortgage is outstanding on your property:

	From	To
All loan amounts	8.49% pa	8.74% pa

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Share prices not always the true value

From Mr Peter Chappell
Sir, I read with interest the article on the flotation of the Halifax Building Society and the sour grapes on the part of the "free lunch" on the existing members' profits (December 17).

It does appear that there is a certain amount of variation being shown in the share price of many of our leading companies not truly reflecting the trading position of Great Britain plc.

One blot on the UK stock market horizon, however, is the regulator for the privatised utilities. Reading Northern Ireland Electricity's latest report, the price cutting imposed by the regulator has reduced the corporation tax paid back into the economy by several million pounds. Chancellor please note!

With the forthcoming January sales, now is the time to invest in those UK companies, the shares of which are discounted against the real market.

Yours faithfully,
PETER CHAPPELL,
31 Brooks Road,
Sutton Coldfield,
West Midlands.

Retuning operation for Channel 5 is crackbrained

From Mr Colin W. Robertson
Sir, We learn from Eric Reguly (December 11) that Channel 5 has been "retuning" far too many homes and now intends to retune only those where the occupants have complained of interference from a test signal, presumably without having been told beforehand when the test signal would be transmitted.

This test appears to be unsatisfactory in concept because the outcome depends entirely on whether the occupant of the home happens to be in a position to notice interference at the time the test signal is transmitted, correctly identifies its cause and then

goes to start on the basis of such a crack-brained operation as the invasive retuning of equipment in 14 million homes. If there was no room for a fifth terrestrial channel, this should have been accepted as a limitation.

What is so magical about drawing the line at five terrestrial channels instead of four? Retuning cannot have positive value for the consumer. Many TV receivers and video recorders will be damaged by accident, ignorance or incompetence during retuning, and, at best, the equipment will work no better than before. Is it really too late to stop this nonsense?

Yours faithfully,
COLIN W. ROBERTSON,
Three Gables,
7a Talbots Drive,
Maidenhead,
Berkshire.

In fact, it is almost beyond belief that Channel 5 was ever

Letters to the Business section can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.



Some of the players who took centre stage during 1996: clockwise from the top, George Staple, Elizabeth Forsyth, Asil Nadir, Richard Branson, Bob Ayling, Bob Crandall, Stella Rimington, Stephen Hinchliffe, Peter Robinson, Ron Sandler, David Rowland, Tim Holley, Peter Davis, Colin Sharman and Nick Land

A year of golden shares and copper-bottomed scandals

It was another, typically British year — groaning pay-packets, ambitious mergers, and the occasional scandal to brighten things up. The Maxwell brothers walked free, a Japanese copper trader caused pandemonium, and Barings executives were hauled over the coals. The stock market raced up and up, with fund managers pondering when the bubble would burst.

Temper flared at British Airways, which announced a triumphal link-up with American Airlines, only to see the exercise marred by a red-tape strike by BA pilots, then enraging employees with plans to shed 10,000 jobs, stripping £1 billion out of the business within three years. BA needs money to upgrade its fleet of 737s to meet new European noise regulations. The first heads rolled at Heathrow — and the luggage carousels mysteriously ground to a halt.

The National Lottery spun its way through another year of howls and catcalls. Camelot, the operator, reported record profits, but faced less well with

sales since the summer of 1995. The first midweek lottery draw takes place in February.

Tim Holley, Camelot's chief executive, went for a quick nap in St James's Park one lunchtime — and saw his photograph splashed across the front cover of a national newspaper. Peter Davis, the lottery regulator, endured public grillings by MPs, then began to bare his teeth, clamping down on under-age sales of lottery tickets.

The year had its tragedies. In July, Amschel Rothschild, tipped as heir-apparent to the Rothschild banking dynasty, was found dead in a Paris hotel room. Three months later, Matthew Harding, the insurance millionaire and deputy chairman of Chelsea Football Club, died in a helicopter crash in Cheshire. He was flying back to London after watching a Chelsea football match in Bolton.

Richard Branson's Virgin Group went into overdrive, launching its long-awaited Johannesburg service, and starting European services from Brussels. Virgin branched into trains and cinemas, took on marketing for Eurostar, launched a record label, and pushed heavily into financial services. Branson dressed in a frock for the launch of Virgin Bride, then flew to Morocco for another ballooning escapade. He even shaved off his beard.

Stock markets tested new highs, and industry was awash with takeovers. The biggest shakeout was in the utilities sector, which witnessed bids worth £10 billion this year.

The City was swept by fresh scandals. Peter Young, a star

Jon Ashworth charts the ups and downs and comings and goings of 1996

fund manager at Morgan Grenfell Asset Management, made a sharp exit in September, after it emerged that his investment strategy was not quite as defined in the corporate brochure. Morgan Grenfell went on to pledge about £200 million in compensation to 100,000 investors.

Panic erupted on the copper markets in June, when it emerged that a Japanese trader, Yasuo Hamanaka, had run up losses of more than £15 billion in ten years of allegedly unauthorised trading. Hamanaka, a senior copper trader at Sumitomo Corporation, was later charged with fraud and forgery. City regulators called for changes at the London Metal Exchange in the wake of the Sumitomo Affair.

Nick Leeson's legacy lived on, as former Barings executives were hauled before City regulators. Fines and reprimands flew, and Peter Norris, the former Barings chief executive, was banned from the City for three years. The Treasury Select Committee criticised the Bank of England over its handling of the Barings case. Mary Walz, one of the executives responsible for supervising Nick Leeson, lost her claim to a £500,000 bonus.

There was better fortune for John Clark, who was ousted as chief executive of BET after it was taken over by Rentokil in April. Clark took Rentokil to court, and was awarded more than £3 million in compensation. Judges in Strasbourg ruled that Ernest Saunders was treated unfairly over Guinness, but threw out his claim for nearly £5 million in damages.

It was a year of breast-beating by Britain's accountants, who did something totally out of character, and disclosed how much they are paid. Colin Sharman, senior partner in KPMG, confessed to earning £740,000 last year. Nick Land at Ernst & Young got by on £427,000. Other Big Six accountants shrewdly avoided publishing their accounts, but it can only be a matter of time.

The year saw more departures from the corporate stage. Lord Weinstock stepped down from GEC after 33 years at the helm. Next to go is Lord Hanson, who announced his intention to retire next September, when he turns 75. He started unravelling the Hanson empire — and saw his pay packet shrink accordingly.

George Staple, director of the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), came under fire over his handling of the Maxwell case. The SFO announced its intention to have a second crack at Kevin following his acquittal in January, but the case was later thrown out by the courts. Television viewers were treated to a delightful "at home" family portrait. A bungling Nigerian fraudster tried to enlist Staple in a scam. Staple stands down in April after four years at Elm House.

Sparks flew in April, when Peter Robinson was sacked as chief executive of the Woolwich Building Society. The hapless Robinson was spending more of his £300,000-a-year salary in the Caribbean, when a friend rang to say all was not well. He returned to allegations about the use of Woolwich gardeners, electricians

and decorators at his mock-Tudor pile in Kent.

Robinson said he was the victim of a "smear campaign", and complained that his 89-year-old mother had been harassed by reporters. He recently signed up as a consultant to Direct Line Insurance.

At about the same time, one of the UK's fastest-growing retail empires was heading for trouble. Stephen Hinchliffe, a Sheffield-based businessman, turned Facia into one of the high street's most visible chains, with names including Freeman Hardy Willis, Sock Shop and Red or Dead.

Things went awry when the Department of Trade and Industry started disqualification proceedings against Hinchliffe. Receivers were appointed to Facia, and the fate of 8,000 employees hung in the balance. The bulk of the group was subsequently sold, saving most of the jobs. The remainder was put into liquidation earlier this month.

Women in finance and industry enjoyed a vintage year. Sheila Masters of KPMG became a dame in the Queen's Birthday Honours, and Julia Cleverdon of Business in the Community was appointed CBE. Marjorie Scardino sealed the heights at Pearson. Denise Kingsmill was appointed a deputy chairman of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission — the only woman to make the post — and Stella Rimington swapped M15 for M&S, signing up as a non-executive director of Marks & Spencer.

Things turned out less favourably for Elizabeth Forsyth, one-time aide to Asil

Nadir. She was jailed for five years in April for her role in laundering £400,000 in funds stolen from Polly Peck International. The outcome was a blow to Nadir, who had hoped an acquittal would clear the way for his return to Britain. He remains in self-imposed exile in northern Cyprus.

The outcome of Granada's £3.9 billion bid for Forte was decided by Carol Galley of Mercury Asset Management. As Sir Rocco Forte bowed out, Gerry Robinson began stinging up buyers for the Forte hotels. Prince al-Waleed bin Talal, the Saudi billionaire, paid £104 million for the George V Hotel in Paris. Mandarin Oriental bought the Hyde Park in London for £86 million. Sandy Lane in Barbados went for £38 million to a consortium led by Depont Desmond, the Irish investor.

Down at Lime Street, David Rowland and Ron Sandler spent the year labouring on Lloyd's of London's ambitious Reconstruction and Renewal (R&R) plan. Their efforts paid off, when, in August, more than 90 per cent of the 34,000 Lloyd's names worldwide voted in favour of a £3.2 billion settlement aimed at drawing a line with the past. Hundreds of Lloyd's workers lined the balconies to watch Rowland ring the Lutine Bell.

Something was bound to go wrong, of course, and Lloyd's ended the year struggling to pay out cheques to names owed money under the settlement. Talk of chaos in the computer room was hotly denied. The battle to squeeze money out of refuseniks continues in 1997.

No festivities in this shop

The Old Curiosity Shop. Radio 4 (FM), 11.30am.

Except for Laurence Olivier's curiously disengaged Scrooge in a 30-minute Radio 2 offering on Christmas Eve, Dickens in festive mood has been little in evidence on BBC radio this Yuletide. There is certainly a lack of holly, goose, laughter and plum pudding in Elizabeth Proud's six-part dramatisation of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, which reaches episode three this morning. Proud has done Baz proud. Much of his dialogue and plotting remains intact, and what has gone is no great loss; this is not Dickens at his best. Denis Quilley is a good choice for storyteller, but I just can't reconcile Tom Courtenay's Quilley with either Flax's or Catermole's illustrations of the little monster.

Whispering Among the Leaves. Radio 4, 3.30pm.

Every second of Sarah Blunt's feature proclaims it to be the work of BBC Bristol's Natural History Unit. This is the kind of documentary monopoly nobody could possibly object to. Blunt sends experts into woodlands to record the sounds made by these birds, insects, rodents and primates who depend on trees for feeding food, luring a mate, and even sending out distress signals when lost. The tree cricket uses leaves to amplify the sound of its wings. The death watch beetle taps its head against wood to attract a mate. The great spotted woodpecker's eight-times-a-second hammering pinpoints the spot where juicy larvae lurk. And there's more... Peter Daville

RADIO 1

7.00am Kevin Greening 11.30am Cossie in Concert. Recorded live at Knebworth. 1.00pm Charlie Jordan 3.00pm Dave Pearce 7.00pm Essential Selection: Best of 96. Peta Tong presents the best new music of the year. 10.00pm One in the Jungle. Jungle Blitz '96. 12.00pm Radio 1 Rap Show, presented by Tim Westwood. 3.00am Arctic Nightingale, with the Early Morning Breakfast Show.

RADIO 2

6.00am Alex Lester 7.30am Wake up to Wogan 9.30am Ken Bruce 12.00pm The Bob Newhart Story 1.00pm Christmas Comedy Classics 1.30pm Debbie Treweek 5.00pm Steve Wright 6.00pm Val Doonican 7.00pm Wolsleygroovy. A quiz series with Johnnie Walker. 7.30pm Friday Night in Music. With the BBC Concert Orchestra. 8.45pm Jamieson. (9/10) 9.00pm Listen to the Band 10.00pm Sheridan Morley 12.00am Christmas Eve

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am The Umpire Strikes Back with Mark Huest 6.00am Jesus Christ 7.00am The Breakfast Programme 9.00am The Magazine with Diana Madill 11.00am Never Walk Alone (4/5) 11.45pm The Food of Love and Hate (4/5) 12.00am Midsday with Mark 2.00pm Rascal on Five 4.00pm Noel 7.00pm 7.00pm News Extra with David McNeil 7.30pm Parkinson on Sport 8.00pm Friday Sport. Simba's v England. 10.00pm Paper Talk, with Jay Rayner and Brian Alexander 11.00pm Night Extra, with David McNeil 12.00am After Hours 2.00am Up All Night

TALK RADIO

5.00am Chris Ashley and Sandy Warr 7.00am Paul Ross 9.00am Scott Chisholm 12.00pm Philip Hodson 2.00pm Tommy Boyd 4.00pm Peter Denny (FM) 5.00pm Zone 10.00pm Mike Allen 1.00pm Ian Collins

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, Host (A Writer) 8.15pm The Life and Concerts of Solo Piano Studies Nos 8-10, Op 39; Debussy (Noels IX and X) Nouveau Livre de Noels 9.00am Morning Concertos: Berlioz (Overture: Les Francs-Juges); Mendelssohn (Six Songs without Words, Op 102 Book II); Copland (Vocalise); 10.00am Musical Encounters. Bach (Carols No 151 (Sussler); Tost, Mein Jesu Komm; Thaurine (Transcendental Quillets in B flat) 12.00pm Composer of the Week: Tchaikovsky 1.00pm News; Bristol Lunchtime Concerts. From St George's, Brandon Hill. Emerson, Quillets. Haydn (String Quartet No 5 in F, Op 5, Dream; Webern (Six Bagatelles, Op 9); Mozart (String Quartet in F, K592) 2.00pm Preoccupations. With the Bristol Arts Players 2.15pm Music Restored (I) 3.00pm The Archive includes: Stravinsky (L'Arlesienne, concert); Beethoven (The Garden of Fand; Tchaikovsky (Sultans The Nutcracker)

RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping (LW) 6.00am News Briefing 6.10am Farming Today 6.25am Prayer for the Day 6.30am Today 6.58am Weather 6.00am News 6.05am Desert Island Discs (FM), with comedian Jennifer Saunders (I) 6.00am Test Match Special (LW). Zimbabwe v England 9.45am United States of America (FM). With Gavin Calk (S/S) 10.00am News. When Site Comes Back (FM) 10.00am An Act of Worship (LW) 10.15pm On This Day (LW) 10.30am Derek Cooper's Necessary Pressures (FM) 10.30pm Test Match Special (LW) 11.00am Park Bench and Co (FM) 11.30am The Old Curiosity Shop (FM) See Choice (S/S) 12.00pm Paid Company (FM) 12.25pm The Food Programme (FM) with Derek Cooper 1.00pm The World at One 1.07pm Test Match Special (LW) 1.40pm The Archers (I) 1.55pm Shipping 2.00pm The Classic Serial: Alice in Wonderland (FM) (1/2) (I) 3.00pm Breath 3.50pm Whispering Among the Leaves. See Choice 4.00pm News 4.05pm The Cartan

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.6-99.8. RADIO 2. FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3. FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4. FM 92.4-94.0. LW 198. MW 720. RADIO 5 LIVE. MW 693, 909. WORLD SERVICE. MW 641. LW 105.8. MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO. MW 1053, 1080. Television. MW radio listings compiled by Peter Davis, Lee Duggan, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McManera.

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STARTS
TODAY



No appetite for Mr Baxter's stale turkey

Stamina holding up? Good, long way to go yet. Day three of the Christmas television marathon and it seemed like a good moment to go in search of a bit of Stanley Baxter. And why not? Morecombe and Wise are still very funny, why not Baxter?

Well, I'm not entirely sure why not, but the simple fact is that on the evidence of last night's Stanley Baxter in Reel Terms (Channel 4) just isn't - not very, anyway. Perhaps it's to do with the fact that while he may be 70, Baxter is still very much alive and working. Fobbing us off with a programme that consisted largely of repeats - sorry, I mean classic clips - from programmes he made years, and in some cases decades, ago seemed to be cheating. I mean, when did you last see a comedy sketch about Maurice Chevalier?

Then there was his much-trumpeted guest star, Dawn French. I didn't have a stopwatch

on it, but my guess is that her appearance lasted all of 30 seconds and ended with a Robert Maxwell pun about the fact that a good five years out of date. Almost totally useless, unless, of course, French was a recording too, a sort of classic guest star along the lines of André Previn.

Spotting the difference between the old and the new was not always easy, which is a tribute to Baxter's much-admired technical skills but not much of an endorsement of his latest scriptwriters. The most up-to-date reference I spotted was to the anniversary celebrations of VE-Day in a gentle spoof of the Queen's speech. The effect was spoiled by the 50th anniversary was actually last year and by the Queen finally wishing us all a very happy 1996.

Watching Baxter at work remains awe-inspiring. The preparation, the make-up, the

characterisation - it's all meticulous, as you would expect from a man so often dubbed the performer's performer. But once you get over the sheer cleverness of him being able to play every part regardless of sex or age, the slow pace of the pre-recorded one-man show begins to pall and you eventually long for a face that hasn't got his flexible features hidden somewhere behind the make-up.

The only modern performer who comes close to Baxter in technical ability is Paul Whitehouse of *The Fast Show*. Its Christmas Special is on tonight, and a compare-and-contrast exercise should prove enlightening.

Back in Albert Square and EastEnders (BBC1), a familiar pattern to what passes for festivities was beginning to emerge. People kept disappearing. First it was Billy Jackson on Christmas Day, now it was Joe "he's been

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

feeling a bit down" Wicks's turn to do a Yuletide runner, fuelled no doubt by concern that Grant Mitchell might turn "comforting" his mother into a full-time occupation.

"He was heading towards the canal," said poor deluded Nigel, ever anxious to please. Not the canal, we all gasped. Doesn't he know what happens to people who head towards the canal? Amazing-

ly Joe survived, talked out of doing anything rash by Grant's promise that he'd be his best friend. Poor kid, sicker than we thought.

Grant celebrated his Good Samaritan act by giving Lorraine the Boxing Day blow - which at least was back in character. "I don't want you to think I was just using you, but..." But, Grant? "But right now I want to be a dad. I want to have a baby." OK, so it was halfway back in character.

So while Lorraine wiped away the single tear that the occasion merited, Grant stalked off to save his marriage - no doubt with the help of the same brother and mother who made Christmas lunch such a memorable occasion. Can't wait for New Year's Eve.

Earlier, the Editor of *The Times* was cited in *The Willows in Winter* (ITV), apparently for writing a deposition in defence of Mr Toad of Toad Hall who, at that precise moment, was facing 116

very serious charges, including one of attempted murder of a chimney-sweep. "The Editor of *The Times*," mused the head judge, "the most important man in the Kingdom..." Toad, naturally, was released immediately - although he might not have been had the judge known that the letter was actually written by Badger. Very similar writing styles, apparently.

This, of course, was the sequel to the original animated adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's book made a couple of years ago. Long gone are the days when lack of material stood in the way of television progress. William Horwood had penned a sequel and so it was that Toad became a fearless aviator and Mole was swept away by the icy river. It being Boxing Day after-noon, both, I am pleased to say, survived to tell the tale.

The strength of the film was that

it had been drawn every bit as beautifully as the original. Its weakness was that in their efforts to give today's children what they expect from cartoons, the makers have understandably concentrated on the rumbustious and easily accessible slapstick of *Mr Toad*. This was good news for Rik Mayall who, characteristically, gives his enthusiastic all in providing the voice, but less good news for those who hold Rat, Mole and Badger dear and yearn for the magical, riparian and - dare I say it - quiet charm of Grahame's book. That said, I expect the intended audience couldn't care less.

Finally, a few words of explanation. Santa and his elves may have delivered all our presents in time, but the head of light entertainment and his poodles were working right up to the last minute on *2Point4 Christmas* and *One Foot in the Grave*. So whatever you thought of them... I quite agree.

BBC1

7.00am NEWS (T) (2500485) 7.10 Joe 90 (7077992) 7.30 Pinocchio (1729889) 8.00 News (T) (5158244) 8.10 Barney (4261183) 8.15 Follow that (7531485) 8.35 The Legend of Prince Valiant (6554398) 9.00 News (T) (3707178) 9.05 Incredible Games (4322992) 9.30 Record Breakers (81805) 10.00 Playdays (2915843) 10.20 The Pink Panther (5558940)

10.40 FILM: Superhero (1984) Comic strip adventure starring Helen Slater as the Man of Steel's cousin, who journeys to Earth on a mission to retrieve a mysterious and magical crystal. Also with Faye Dunaway and Peter O'Toole. Directed by Jeannot Szwarc (4243453)

12.40pm WIDEOUT (3219737)

1.10 NEWS (T) (62934824)

1.22 REGIONAL NEWS (4801853)

1.25 NEIGHBOURS (T) (5870324)

1.45 JUST WILLIAM A headmaster attempts to sign the mischievous little boy up for his prep school (445008)

2.15 DISNEY TIME Sean Maguire introduces a session of festive fun from Inverness, including clips from *The Snows in the Stone*, *Toy Story*, *Mickey's Christmas Carol* and *101 Dalmatians* (6334078)

2.55 FILM: Grease (1978) Musical starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John as a star-crossed high-school couple. Directed by Randal Kessler (5572498)

4.40 THE WORLD OF PETER RABBIT AND FRIENDS (7144468)

5.05 BLUE PETER: THE BEST BITS (T) (788282)

6.00 NEWS (T) and weather (452195)

6.15 REGIONAL NEWS (440350)

6.30 JIM BREAK Jim Davidson introduces a festive edition of the snooker-based show with guests Patsy Palmer, Bette Emberg, Nicola Benjamin, Steve Davis, John Parrott and Dennis Taylor (114)

7.00 DAD'S ARMY (T) (8811)

8.00 ONLY FOOLS AND HORSES Part two. Del buys a new manual to help him show Rachel more appreciation and give him the confidence to make positive decisions. Concludes Sunday (4331)

9.00 NEWS (T), regional news and weather (8824)

9.30 FILM: The Firm (1983) Thriller adapted from the novel by John Grisham starring Tom Cruise, Gene Hackman, Holly Hunter and Jeanne Tripplehorn. A bright, young Harvard law graduate is headhunted by a high-class company, but it's not long before he begins to realise the firm is run by the Mafia, who will stop at nothing to silence him. Directed by Sydney Pollack (135335)

12.00 JACKIE MASON LIVE AT THE LONDON PALLADIUM Footage of the comedian's show recorded earlier this year in London (5954)

1.00am FILM: Carry on Matron (1972) Bawdy comedy, starring Sid James, Kenneth Williams, Hattie Jacques, Joan Sims, Charles Hawtrey and Barbara Windsor (1988)

2.30 WEATHER (6837667)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder to record a particular programme. In the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record, VideoPlus+ (V), VideoPlus+ (V) and Video PlusCode are trademarks of Creative Development Ltd.

BBC2

7.20am FILM: A Man for All Seasons (1988) starring Charlton Heston, Vanessa Redgrave and John Gielgud. A made-for-television version of Robert Bolt's play about Sir Thomas More fighting Henry VIII over the King's desire for a divorce. Directed by Charlton Heston (5005319)

8.45 FILM: Little Dorrit (1987) (2/2) With Derek Jacobi, Cyril Cusack, Sarah Pickering and Joan Greenwood. Concluding Christine Edzard's two-part adaptation of Dickens's masterpiece. Directed by Christine Edzard (8161758)

12.40pm RACING FROM CHEPTOW JUFAN Wilson introduces the 12.50, 1.20 and 2.25 races from Chepstow and the 2.35 from Leopardstown (5497737)

2.50 FILM: An Affair to Remember (1957) Love on an ocean wave for Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr. Directed by Leo McCarey (T) (8574768)

4.40 CHOIR OF THE YEAR (3835350)

5.20 FILM: Singin' in the Rain (1952) starring Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor, Jean Hagen and Cyd Charisse. Classic, Oscar-nominated musical comedy set in the 1920s, following the fortunes of two old friends - one a silent Hollywood star, the other a composer. Directed by Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen (T) (5541864)

7.00 HOUSE DETECTIVES Architectural sleuths uncover the hidden history of a seemingly ordinary Victorian house in Norwich, south London (T) (5973)

7.30 ESCAPING FROM LIBERTY The first of two programmes in which traveller and historian, Jan Morris, revisits cities that have influenced her life. Tonight, she visits Trieste in Italy, Cairo and Manhattan (T) (891331)

8.20 THE WORKS: The Secret Life of the Pope Fifty years ago Pope John Paul II was better known as subservient playwright, actor and poet Karol Wojtyla. Mark Lawson journeys to Poland to meet old friends of the radical writer (T) (702669)

9.00 SHOOTING STARS Spoof game show with guests Jarvis Cocker, Emma Roberts, Alan Bremner and Ian Kelsey (T) (322553)

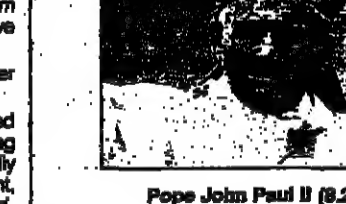
9.40 THE FAST SHOW CHRISTMAS SPECIAL Seasonal comedy (T) (289388)

10.35 KNOWING ME, KNOWING YULE - WITH ALAN PARTRIDGE Alan Partridge (alias Steve Grogan) hosts a Christmas house party (T) (12138)

11.20 FILM: High Heels (1991) With Victoria Abril and Marisa Paredes. A woman in the shadow of her mother, a famous singer, marries her mother's old lover and also falls for a drag queen who impersonates the famous mother. Directed by Pedro Almodovar (2234532)

1.00am A NIGHT OF WONDER Slieve Donard in concert (T) (2984119)

2.00 WEATHER (7947175)



Pope John Paul II (8.20pm)

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CHOICE

Escaping From Liberty BBC2, 7.30pm

The title is a contradiction but a deliberate one. Presenting the first of two films about her favourite cities, Jan Morris explains that while her North Wales home could not be more like paradise she has always felt the urge to get away from it. This week she "escapes" to Trieste, Cairo and Manhattan, all of which have a personal resonance. Although she made her name with the written word, and declares that she finds television a clumsy medium, Morris takes the camera easily in her stride. As in her writing, she presents a subjective essay. Trieste, which (as James Morris) she saw as a British soldier, sparks nostalgia for past imperial glories. In Cairo she feels oppressed by history. New York recalls a first visit in 1953, just after she had reported the conquest of Everest for *The Times*.

Just Dancing Around? Channel 4, 7.30pm

The choreographer Mike Figgis (*Leaving Las Vegas*) turns to documentary with a portrait of the choreographer, William Forsythe. In the first of a series that will also feature Trisha Brown and Richard Alston. Although a New Yorker, Forsythe spends most of his working life in Germany as director of the Frankfurt Ballet. Shot over six weeks, Figgis's film is a mixture of interview and rehearsal footage following Forsythe and his company as they prepare for an opening night. Known as Billy, Forsythe is a hard taskmaster and a cerebral one, who is apt to talk about the refractive counterpoint. But when Carter's sponsor of the ballet, turns the focus into a jewellery market, he vents his fury in language hardly suitable for a programme going out so early.

The Works: The Secret Life of the Pope BBC2, 8.20pm

Pope John Paul II is one of the most conservative pontiffs this century. But as Karol Wojtyla, a young man in his native Poland, he was a poet and playwright of notably progressive views. Wojtyla, a youthful radical who became an elderly reactionary. Rather, he suggests that the radical side of Wojtyla has never entirely disappeared. Among Lawson's witnesses is the Watergate journalist, Carl Bernstein, who brackets John Paul with President Nelson Mandela as a champion of the oppressed.

Jackie Mason BBC1, Midnight

Former rabbi Mason proves once again that a New Yorker's Jewish humour can travel beyond Manhattan. Standing before an audience in the vastness of the London Palladium, with no props beyond his voice and body language, he performs for an hour and is never stuck for a word. Indeed the words come so thick and fast that the brain is keeping up with them. Mason's comedy is born out of acute social observation. He starts from the realities of everyday behaviour and exposes its pretensions and ironies. Moving fluently from one topic to another, he gives us jokes about Jews and gentiles, doctors, diet, marriage, shopping and anything else that comes into his head. The act may be entirely rehearsed. If so, Mason's trick is to make it seem spontaneous.

Peter Waymark

11.20 FILM: High Heels (1991) With Victoria Abril and Marisa Paredes. A woman in the shadow of her mother, a famous singer, marries her mother's old lover and also falls for a drag queen who impersonates the famous mother. Directed by Pedro Almodovar (2234532)

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SATELLITE AND CABLE

For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Directory, published on Saturday

SKY 1

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JOBS' LOT 36

The man who can put bite back into Apple



BUSINESS

WRIGHT STUFF 36

Chrysalis chief given bonus despite losses



FRIDAY DECEMBER 27 1996

BUSINESS EDITOR LINDSAY COOK

Branson adviser accused of corruption over Botswana airline



Branson: considering deal to expand in Caribbean

By Jason Nisse

A WARRANT for the arrest of an international aviation consultant working with Richard Branson on the expansion of Virgin Atlantic, has been issued by the Botswana authorities. It alleges corruption.

Brian Pocock, 60, has been helping Virgin to put together a £100 million deal to take a stake in BWIA International, the Caribbean carrier, along with consultancy work for other leading firms, including the financing arm of British Aerospace.

However, earlier this month the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Crime in Botswana issued a

warrant for Mr Pocock's arrest for alleged "corrupt practice" to do with his actions while general manager of Air Botswana from 1989 to 1994.

The allegations centre on events in 1992 and are believed to relate to the purchase, for about £30 million, of two BAe 146 aircraft. Bernard Humpris, the principal investigator, appealed for help in locating Mr Pocock. Earlier this week *The Times* located Mr Pocock, who now lives in Leicestershire. He said that he was aware of the arrest warrant but did not know what the Botswana allegations were.

"I have been out of the country and have only just become aware of these

charges," he said. "I have already given my legal representatives instructions to get in touch with the Botswana prosecutors."

Mr Pocock added that there had been some controversy about the purchase of the BAe 146 aircraft, but this was because the contract was entered into before the Gulf War, which had changed the economic climate for aviation. Mr Pocock added that a supportive statement about him had been read out in the Botswana parliament.

Virgin confirmed that Mr Pocock had been working with the airline but said it was not aware of the Botswana allegations. "Brian Pocock

came to us with the BWIA deal," said Will Whitehorn of Virgin. "He is due a fee if the deal comes off, but he disappeared before the talks were able to be concluded. We would like to hear from him."

Mr Pocock said that he had now been back in touch with Virgin since his return from abroad and had spoken to Mr Branson, who was supportive.

The BWIA deal would involve Virgin taking an initial 27 per cent stake in the airline, which is based in Trinidad and Tobago, en route to a £300 million privatisation of the carrier. Virgin would also have an option to buy another 24 per cent to

gain majority control. BWIA and Virgin are also planning to share aircraft, ground staff and training facilities.

BWIA is one of the main airlines flying between the United Kingdom and the West Indies. Mr Branson has had a long connection with the area as owner of the island of Necker in the British Virgin Islands.

BWIA hired Mr Pocock to advise them on aircraft purchases and he then approached Virgin about the deal to bring the two airlines together. He confirmed that he had been working for many other British firms, the most prominent being British Aerospace.

Lenders unite over boom in house prices

By Sara McConnell

THE housing market is set to continue its remarkable recovery next year, with prices rising by as much as 10 per cent — or more than three times the current rate of inflation.

In a rare display of combined optimism, the Halifax and Nationwide building societies each predicted a 7 per cent rise in average prices, with the number of people moving house next year set to rise by more than 10 per cent.

Abbey National, the second-largest lender, also believes that prices will rise by 7 per cent, with transactions climbing by as much as 12 per cent. The forecasts of the two largest building societies for next year's market were echoed by the National Association of Estate Agents, where Hugh Dunsmore Hardy, chief executive, predicted a rise in prices of between 6 per cent and 8 per cent.

At HSBC, Jonathan Loynes, the UK economist, suggested a 7 per cent price increase. Rob Thomas, housing analyst at UBS, was more optimistic. He said that prices would rise by 10 per cent in 1997 and a further 10 per cent in 1998.

This year has seen rises of more than 7 per cent, confounding the cautious predictions made at the end of 1995. The Halifax's monthly index, to be published early next

month, is expected to show that prices continued to rise by 1 per cent month on month, and by nearly 8 per cent compared with December 1995. The society was forced to revise upwards its cautious prediction of a 2 per cent rise over 1996 when it became clear that the recovery was stronger than the society had anticipated.

The rise in prices in 1996 was fuelled, in part, by a shortage of supply. This looks set to continue into 1997, with the demand for family homes in desirable areas of the country remaining strong, while smaller, less attractive properties continue to languish.

Mr Dunsmore Hardy described the recovery in 1996 as "patchy", with prices up by 15 per cent to 20 per cent in parts of the South East. In other areas they remained static or fell.

More people are expected to buy and sell houses next year, reversing the trend of recent years. In 1995, the worst year in recent history, 1.1 million homes changed hands. The Halifax expects a 10 per cent rise on the present 1.2 million transactions a year, while HSBC believes that the rise could be as high as 15 per cent.

Nationwide and the Abbey expect a rise to 1.4 million transactions. Andrew Popple,

managing director at Abbey, said: "This will be the highest level since 1990, although this is still some way off from the average 1.6 million transactions experienced before the late 1980s boom."

Few expect rising prices and transactions to herald a 1980s-style boom, however. Mortgage rates have started to rise in the wake of the quarter-point base-rate increase before the Budget. Gary Marsh of the Halifax said that this should "take some steam out of the housing market". In addition, historically, borrowers are still servicing large amounts of mortgage debt and this should damp down any incipient boom.

Mr Marsh also pointed to moves by lenders to cut down on the generous discounts and cashback offers to borrowers that were introduced in a desperate bid to stimulate the market during the slump.

Now that the market is recovering on its own, lenders are attempting to return to more traditional mortgage offers. The Abbey National is planning a new range of mortgages for next month that it says will bring "a return to a fairer pricing policy for all".

Rising house prices and interest rates will make houses less affordable, according to the TSB. The bank's latest affordability index shows that borrowers typically will have to spend £30.70 of every £100 of take-home pay, instead of the current £25.60.

But Steve Lowe, head of mortgage marketing at TSB, added: "At first glance this looks depressing, it isn't. The affordability figure over the past 20 years has averaged £39.70."



The Five go off on tour: Julian, George, Dick, Anne and Timmy, the dog open in Leeds on February 3

Business takes gloomy view of Budget's value

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

BUSINESS leaders have concluded that last month's Budget is damaging — with the 1p income tax cut viewed as a particular "mistake". The Confederation of British Industry is concerned that Mr Clarke's spending plans were not as tough as they might have been, and that the spending cuts are being met from government-funded capital spending. The British Chambers of Commerce believe that the 1p cut in income tax in particular was a "mistake".

The CBI says that some of the Chancellor's tax measures "threaten to discourage normal business activity", while warning that the Budget may not remove the pressure for higher interest rates, which is hurting export and import-competing industries by driving up sterling.

The CBI does accept in its post-Budget analysis that "there were a few specific measures that could be welcomed by business", including the moves on small firms' uniform business rates and

the cut in small business corporation tax rates.

The post-Budget report by Douglas Giddens, CBI head of economic policy, also applauds the fact that Mr Clarke was not as generous as he might have been, given the closeness of a general election. But the overall message is negative. "The Budget has added to business costs and cut capital spending to fund 'headline' income tax cuts which could not be paid for through other expenditure savings," it argues.

Five in search of backers

Investors are being asked to put up £75,500 to fund a tour of Enid Blyton's "The Famous Five", a musical produced by the King's Head theatre in north London. The tour will start in Leeds on February 3 and is to coincide with the centenary of Enid Blyton's birth. The play, set in 1938, involves spies chasing Uncle Quentin's secret formula for the Ministry of Defence.

BZW chief missed Panel meeting

By Jason Nisse

SIMON de Zoete, vice-chairman of Barclays de Zoete Wedd, the merchant bank, and leader of the Northern Electric defence team, missed the crucial meeting of the Takeover Panel that led to BZW being accused of failing to tell the panel the full extent of fees it was paid to defend Northern against the bid from CE Electric of America.

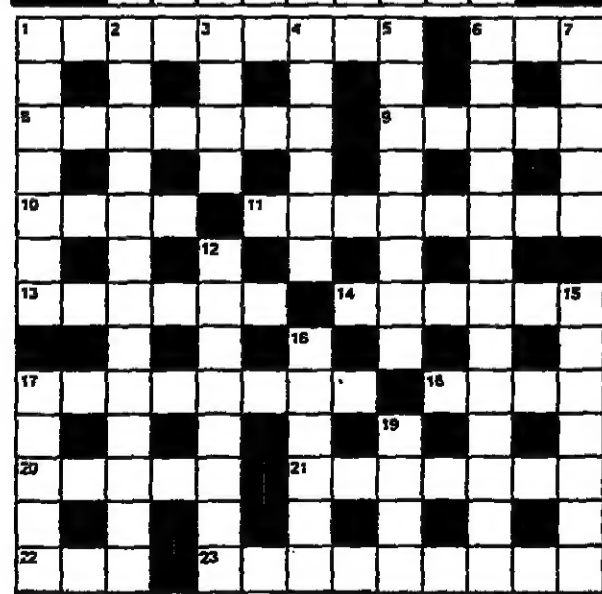
The non-disclosure led to the bid being extended by four days, leading to shareholders holding an extra 0.5 per cent of Northern accepting CE Electric's £782 million offer, so lifting acceptance above 50 per cent and delivering the company into the hands of CE.

Mr de Zoete was in Scotland on business when BZW and Schroders, also working for Northern, went to the panel last Wednesday to seek consent to buy Northern shares in the market. BZW told the panel that it was not to be paid a success fee, in spite of there being a £250,000 discretionary fee in its contract. BZW has refused to say who led the team in Mr de Zoete's absence.

On Thursday morning, the panel ruling was faxed to Mr de Zoete at his Edinburgh hotel. Seeing it mention a "flat fee", he rang BZW's lawyers and called a meeting to discuss what ought to be done. The meeting did not take place until that evening because Mr de Zoete had to fly back from Edinburgh, and a panel member was not contacted until 10.15pm.

This delay led to the panel ruling that the bid should be kept open. The panel is still investigating the bid and is to publish its findings shortly.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 975

ACROSS

- 1 Something preserving dignity (4-5)
- 6 Bathroom fitting; make use of (5)
- 8 'Knights' beef joint (7)
- 9 Solids at bottom of cup (5)
- 10 Smart, genteel (4)
- 11 Timetable (5)
- 13 Interfere with (workings) (6)
- 14 Military policeman (6)
- 17 Hamburgers, etc (4-4)
- 18 Follow; later, worse, batsmen (4)
- 20 Ruh sore (5)
- 21 Game on green baize (7)
- 22 Take (tennis) (3)
- 23 Five-pointed star (9)

DOWN

- 1 Pernickety person (7)
- 2 First spirit visiting Scrooge (9-4)
- 3 Industrial pollution (4)
- 4 She once held the gorgeous East in fee (Wordsworth) (6)
- 5 Saviour (8)
- 6 Seasonal ballet (Tchaikovsky) (3,10)
- 7 Adhesive; imitation gem (5)
- 12 Samuel Smiles' gospel (4-4)
- 15 Traveller to sturgeon (7)
- 16 His choice was no choice at all (6)
- 17 Adjust image for clarity (5)
- 19 Sweet fizzy drink (4)

The solution to 974 will be published Wednesday, January 1

Printed and published by the Times Newspapers Ltd, 1, Abchurch Lane, London EC4N 3DF. Tel: 020 7566 1000. Fax: 020 7566 1001. Email: business@times.co.uk

Bifu predicts huge finance job losses

By Eric Reguly

About 150,000 more finance jobs could disappear over the next five years, the Banking Insurance and Finance Union (Bifu) said yesterday. The new losses would come on top of the 130,000 that have been eliminated since the late 1980s, when banks and building societies began to close branches. Some 5,000 bank and building society branches have been closed in the past five years.

Bifu said banking and insurance jobs are the most vulnerable. The latter are at

risk because of the shift towards selling products to customers over the telephone.

The threat to banking jobs, it said, will come from new technology, such as home banking, which will result inevitably in the closure of more high street branches.

Ed Sweeney, Bifu's general secretary, said: "The more banks cut their high street presence and undermine person-to-person presence in banking, the easier it is for competitors like supermarkets to come in and cream the market."

Dow climbs while Nikkei slips back

By Alasdair Murray

WALL STREET and Tokyo went in opposite directions yesterday as the Dow Jones industrial average celebrated a successful year with further rises while the Nikkei index continued to be dragged down by Japanese economic worries.

The Dow had edged up nearly 30 points to around 6,551 by early afternoon, boosted by rises in blue chips such as IBM and AT&T. Traders said mutual funds were buying shares in companies that had performed strongly over the year.

But the Nikkei closed down 257.83 points at 19,291.53, with

the market worried that a tightening of fiscal policy will hinder Japan's fragile economic growth. At one stage the Nikkei had fallen nearly 700 points as traders gave the draft fiscal budget, which includes seven trillion yen (£7 billion) in tax rises, a resounding thumbs down.

The yen also lost ground, falling to a four-year low against the dollar, while bonds also dropped back. The Nikkei has now fallen around 5 per cent in the past three weeks.

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Counterfeit fear over euro notes

By Oliver August

THE new euro notes could become the favourite currency of counterfeiters, says De La Rue, Britain's leading banknote printer.

The notes were first shown to the public at the European Union summit in Dublin this month but changes to the design are likely to become necessary. A working party at the European Monetary Institute, the forerunner of the European central bank, is charged with examining the security features of the notes during the next six months.

According to De La Rue, counterfeiters may already be trying to produce euro lookalikes while European consumers are not yet used to the notes, which could



enter general circulation as early as 1999. A spokesman said: "The euro could be easily counterfeited in the same way that the dollar has been the counterfeiters' favourite for a long time. The counterfeiters can respond extremely fast."

De La Rue's own design for the euro notes was rejected in favour of an Austrian design chosen by a Brussels

committee. But De La Rue is expected to win some of the euro printing contracts. The testing of the paper and various test printings are expected to take place in the second half of next year.

Decisions on how to allocate the printing will also be made later in 1997. Part of the printing will be done by central banks, which are responsible for banknote printing in some European countries.

De La Rue is interested in designing security features, supplying the paper and printing the estimated 12 billion notes required for monetary union. But monetary union will also cost it some business because some European countries will cease to be individual clients of De La Rue's when their currencies disappear in 2002.



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